

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Ringsend College
School Address	Cambridge Road Ringsend Dublin 4
Roll number	70200D

Date of Evaluation: 14-11-2018



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.

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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

DEIS Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	12 / 13 / 14 November 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	<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

CONTEXT

Ringsend College participates the DEIS action plan. It offers the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), a compulsory Transition Year (TY) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). There are currently 166 post-primary students enrolled in the school. The school has the services of a part-time home-school-community-liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP).

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 overall leadership and quality of DEIS action planning for improvement is satisfactory.
- The revision of the DEIS plan mid-cycle has improved the school's engagement with the initiative; however, the revised plan has omitted some of the targets and initiatives currently being progressed.
- The importance of the DEIS action plan for improvement is now reflected in subject plans; however, the measures have not yet been sufficiently integrated into classroom practice.
- A number of students have been targeted for additional literacy and numeracy support; however, the delivery of additional support for students with special educational needs (SEN) has not as yet commenced.
- The measures to support attendance, retention and transitions are effective; however the allocation of time for home visits is not in line with the guidelines for this scheme and there are insufficient supports for some targeted students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The school should further review its most recent DEIS plan to ensure that it is informed by quantitative and qualitative baseline data and that it adequately reflects all the targets and measure in place to support progress.

- Teachers should progress their classroom practice in line with the targets and measures documented in the DEIS plan; initiatives previously evaluated to be successful in promoting literacy should also be re-instated.
- The delivery of additional support for students with SEN should be implemented forthwith and all the hours allocated for this purpose to be fully utilised.
- The school should optimise its use of the DEIS funding available to support its targeted students; it should also ensure adherence to the guidelines regarding the HSCL scheme and home visits.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The overall leadership and quality of DEIS action planning for improvement is satisfactory. Good planning and practices were noted in some areas of the DEIS themes, while in others considerable improvement is required.

To address challenges in implementing the DEIS targets established in 2016, working groups were established to develop new targets and measures to support the implementation and progression of DEIS. This is good. However, to ensure that all themes are embraced by all teachers, it is recommended that these working groups be reconstituted to include teachers from a range of different disciplines.

Teachers reported carrying out surveys and using information from students' general diagnostic assessment tests on entry into first year and their educational passports as the baseline data for DEIS planning. It was also reported that some of the baseline data informing targets has been accrued from general discussion rather than empirical data. A more systematic approach to accruing and recording both quantitative and attitudinal baseline data that can serve to demonstrate improvement on retesting is recommended.

The rationale for revising the DEIS plan is acknowledged. However, some of the targets and measures central to improvement in some aspects of DEIS have been omitted in the most recent plan. Furthermore, the lessons observed indicated that the references to DEIS included in the subject planning documentation did not translate into classroom practice in a number of instances.

All junior cycle students participate in JCSP and some have been targeted for additional literacy and numeracy support. Students identified by the care team are targeted for additional supports by the guidance service, SCP and HSCL in accordance with need. No supports have been identified for the students targeted for behavioural issues. The Friends for Life programme has been used in the school to support behaviour but the intervention has not been continued. This should be reviewed.

The quality of use of resources is satisfactory. Additional funding available to the school is currently used to provide all students with hot lunches. However, other resources such as a breakfast club and homework or study facilities are not currently in place. The lack of personnel was cited as the reason for not having a breakfast club, while supervised study is offered later in the academic year. Given the presence in the school of students who are currently homeless, these initiatives along with other appropriate in-school interventions should be established forthwith to support these students and enhance their wellbeing.

2. DEIS THEMES

2.1 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy

The overall quality of action planning for and the implementation of targets and initiatives to improve literacy is fair. There is a lack of clarity in the most recent plan regarding the targets for literacy and there was limited evidence of the specific measures identified to promote literacy development in the lessons observed.

Surveys and information from students' general diagnostic assessment tests have informed DEIS planning for literacy. The most recent plan outlines two targets; to improve spelling, punctuation and handwriting in first year and to develop oral communication skills in second year. However, the plan does not include the literacy targets contained in a document drawn up by the literacy committee relating to improving the reading age of students and enabling students to assess and reflect on their own work. This should be addressed.

Measures identified to support literacy include one library period each week for first and second-year students, checking copybooks monthly, peer corrections, formative assessment practices, keyword testing, debates, quizzes and literacy trips and events.

At the time of the evaluation, the provision of additional support for students with SEN had not commenced in spite of the additional resources allocated to the school since the beginning of the academic year. While the need for good planning is acknowledged, it should not compromise the delivery of additional support from the outset. This should be addressed forthwith and students should receive the support they are entitled to. There was also a lack of clarity regarding the use of all the hours allocated to the school for the provision of additional support. Senior management should ensure sufficient deployment of teachers to fully utilise all hours made available.

Effective or highly effective teaching and learning methodologies were observed in a minority of lessons, resulting in very good oral participation and facilitating experiences of success for students. However, there was limited evidence of the other specific measures documented to support literacy improvement. Implementation of the strategies to improve literacy in the school's DEIS plan were not evident in the lessons observed.

The weekly library period for students has been discontinued because there is no longer a librarian in situ. Teachers are also awaiting JCSP funding before engaging in some of the other literacy initiatives previously used.

Improved literacy skills support greater access to the curriculum and in turn contribute to improving outcomes in some of the other DEIS themes. The word of the week which, according to teachers, is promoted in all tutor groups, should be re-enforced across all lessons. The library period for junior cycle students should be restored and the initiatives previously evaluated to have improved literacy skills be re-instated. Greater attention to the frequency and quality of homework assignments is also recommended in all lessons to support improvement in spelling, punctuation, grammar and assessment practices.

Numeracy

The overall quality of action planning for and the implementation of targets and initiatives to improve numeracy is satisfactory. There is good leadership of the newly formed numeracy committee resulting in a more dynamic approach to numeracy development. Baseline data informing numeracy targets and measures include diagnostic assessment tests and certificate examinations results.

Two targets have been identified; capacity to read an analogue clock, and placing students with a STEN score of 5 or higher into the higher-level mathematics class for the Junior Certificate. Teachers also reported including the conversion from fractions to percentages as a DEIS target, although this is not documented in the revised plan.

Student capacity to read the analogue clock is, in itself, a very finite target. The target should be expanded to promote a broader understanding of time, time zones, timetables, recognising patterns

and sequencing. In this way numeracy could be developed across all subject areas and year groups in a more meaningful way.

Good practice was noted in one tutor period where a puzzle given to students promoted problem solving skills and challenge. A range of such initiatives should become embedded into tutor time for all students. A newly introduced digital application to support numeracy and Mathematics has engaged junior cycle students very positively in progressing the mastery of fractions and percentages. Of particular importance to the students was the manner in which they could determine success, work towards it and be recognised for their achievements through the provision of externally attributed prizes. This demonstrates students' motivation to engage with initiatives where they can experience success in a very concrete manner.

Examination attainment

The quality of action planning for and the implementation of targets and measures to improve examination attainment ranges from good to fair. The effective co-ordination of JCSP supports the affirmation of student progress and success at punctuated intervals in the junior cycle programme. This, in turn, promotes positive attitudes to school and optimises retention from junior to senior cycle.

Two targets have been established; that Junior Certificate students will complete at least three subjects at higher level and that Leaving Certificate students will complete at least two subjects at higher level. However, there was ambiguity as to whether students will sit the decreed number of subjects at higher level or whether they will merely follow the higher level course. A number of in-school measures have been identified to support improvement. Senior cycle students can also avail of the supplementary lessons offered through a Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) scheme, but these are not documented in the plan.

Examination outcomes in recent years indicate that these targets require review. The number of students progressing from foundation to ordinary level and from ordinary to higher level has increased and this is good. However, the number of students failing higher level has also increased in certain subjects. It is thus recommended that the targets for examination attainment be articulated in terms of students taking the level most appropriate to their ability and potential.

The provision of workshops on study skills is good practice. To maximise outcomes, school management should make homework support or supervised study available to all students for the entire year. In addition, teachers should ensure that the quantity of homework or study assignments are sufficient to merit staying on in school for the allocated time.

2.2 Attendance, Retention, Transitions

The overall quality of action planning to improve attendance and retention is good. There is good oversight of student attendance and currently there are only five students targeted for attention due to poor attendance. Continued absence from school results in a home visit from the HSCL co-ordinator. Issues of attendance are raised at the weekly care meetings. It was reported that the provision of in-school free lunches has been successful in retaining students to the end of the school day.

There has been 100% retention of students in junior cycle in recent years. It was reported that almost all of the students who leave school early have chosen to follow alternative educational pathways including apprenticeships. The introduction of an LCA programme to encourage these students to remain in Ringsend College, where they would have continuity of support, merits consideration.

The targets established for the theme of transitions require further development as the plan only refers to the transition from senior cycle to further education or the world of work. The measures identified for this target are delivered by the Guidance service. However, discussion and information regarding further education and initiatives such as HEAR and the Disability Access Route to Education

should be commenced as early as possible in junior cycle in order to raise expectations and allow parents to plan ahead for the demands of their children's future educational ambitions, needs and requirements.

The effective SCP initiatives for supporting students making the transition from primary to secondary school are not adequately reflected in the revised DEIS plan. There is no reference to the events day organised by TY students for pupils from the feeder primary schools. Nor is there reference to the important supports organised during school holiday time such as the summer camp prior to entry into first year and the co-ordinated Easter activities.

The recently introduced compulsory TY programme affords good opportunity to support the transition from junior to senior cycle. However, the allocation of time for work experience should be reviewed and Guidance should be included as a timetabled module. Further learning experiences and activities that promote students' personal and social development in order to enhance their wellbeing should also be developed. A module preparing students for the challenges of senior cycle should be considered in the last term of the programme.

2.3 Partnership with parents and others

The overall quality of partnership with parents and others is very good. There is a targeted list of students and the supports offered include regular contact with parents of first-year students through information meetings, coffee mornings, and home visits where necessary. Parents reported very good relationships with the HSCL co-ordinator and praised the range of courses offered for them.

However, in accordance with the guidelines for the operation of this scheme the HSCL co-ordinator must comply with the requirements to spend one third of their time on home visits.

The recently launched lunch club which is managed by SCP is a praiseworthy endeavour which affords students a safe space to engage in social activities and to discuss issues of concern where necessary. The SCP co-ordinator however, indicated a desire and willingness to offer additional supports to the school, supports that would benefit some of the targeted students cope with their difficult circumstances. This should be facilitated by school management.

Appendix

TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

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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 welcomes the recommendations stemming from the inspection report and looks forward to working as part of the whole-school community in implementing these to the greatest extent possible.

- The school's DEIS plan has been up-dated and all new targets and initiatives are currently being progressed.
- Additional qualitative and quantitative base-line data have been gathered.
- Initiatives have been integrated into classroom practice.
- Testing of students informs tracking of students' abilities and this is also used to reflect the targets in place.
- All support for students with special needs has commenced.
- More time has been allocated for home visits.
- The school is optimising use of DEIS funding available to support targeted students.
- The target DEIS groups have changed and there is a greater range of teachers from different disciplines.
- Support for students who have behavioural issues is an active part of SEN interventions.
- We are currently reviewing programmes such as Working Things Out and Friends For Life and the school is planning to re-introduce these programmes.
- A very successful homework club is running after school.
- The school is examining the possibility of running a Breakfast Club in September.
- Literacy targets relating to the improvement of reading age and reflection on students' own work are included in the up-dated DEIS plan.
- Numeracy targets have been expanded to promote a broader understanding of time in different contexts.

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;