

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

**DEIS EVALUATION**

**REPORT**

<b>School Name</b>	McEgan College
<b>School Address</b>	Macroon Co Cork
<b>Roll number</b>	71030J

**Date of Evaluation: 05-05-2017**



## **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; at post-primary level, 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; a response was not received from the board.

## DEIS Evaluation

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	03-05-2017 to 05-05-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion 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 principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

McEgan College participates in the DEIS action plan. It has the services of a part-time home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). At the time of the evaluation, there were 188 students enrolled in the school. The school offers the Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied programme and the established Leaving Certificate.

### 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:

- While the school has engaged successfully in the DEIS action planning process in the past, action is required at this point to strengthen the planning process and improve the coordination of DEIS planning.
- SMART (specific measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) targets are set in some areas; in other areas, targets require review.
- The previous iteration of the school's school self-evaluation (SSE) planning process provides ample evidence that action planning for improvement can be undertaken successfully; however, this process was not used to develop the current DEIS plan.
- While the quality of DEIS action planning in relation to literacy and numeracy is good overall, planning for examination attainment requires improvement.
- The quality of action planning for the other areas of DEIS is very good.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- A systematic, strategic approach should be taken to the overall DEIS planning process. In this context, the school should put a DEIS co-ordinator and a DEIS planning team in place.
- SMART targets based on the analysis of relevant data should be set across the DEIS themes and measures, including in-class strategies where relevant, should be agreed, implemented and monitored.

- There is a need to embed a whole-school understanding of how school self-evaluation processes and DEIS planning are interwoven and to recognise that the school improvement plan and the DEIS plan are a single entity.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING IMPROVEMENT**

The quality of DEIS action planning ranges from very good in some themes to requiring improvement in other themes. The school has engaged successfully in the DEIS action planning process in the past. At this point, action is required to strengthen the planning process and improve the coordination of DEIS planning.

School management and staff are positively disposed towards using strategies identified in the DEIS plan to drive change and improve the learning experiences of students. The staff is divided into teams, each leading two aspects of DEIS. It was reported that while key staff members remain within a specific DEIS team, generally members are moved each year to a different team in order to further develop their understanding of DEIS. While this is laudable, the timeframes for such changes in personnel should be kept under review.

Action is currently required to improve coordination of DEIS planning. There is no overarching DEIS team or DEIS coordinator in place. It is imperative that a systematic, strategic approach be taken to the overall DEIS planning process. In this context, the school should put a DEIS coordinator and a DEIS planning team in place. DEIS planning should be included on the agenda of a number of formal staff meetings each year and updates on all aspects of DEIS should be provided to all staff.

Target setting requires improvement in some areas. While some targets are SMART, others are not. Some re-positioning of targets that might be more appropriately viewed as actions is advisable. DEIS plans should be reviewed to ensure that SMART targets are set and related to enhancing outcomes for students, where relevant. Many very good whole-school strategies, which relate to a number of DEIS themes, are being implemented. Other strategies, not identified in the school plan but which enhance student attainment and other themes, are also executed by the school. The school should include these strategies in its DEIS plan.

In some instances, the strategies selected are informed by a clear sense of the desired outcomes. In others, improvement is required. Laudably, administrative actions, such as those involved in monitoring attendance, operate in support of strategies that directly affect teaching and learning practices. Weekly meetings of the student support team ensure a co-ordinated approach to interventions for target students and groups.

The previous iteration of the school's school self-evaluation (SSE) process provides ample evidence that action planning can be undertaken successfully. The very good SSE literacy and numeracy plans developed in previous years incorporated significant baseline data, along with actions, targets and monitoring mechanisms. There is a need now to combine the DEIS planning process with the SSE process to address in-class strategies which will further advance student outcomes in areas already identified. Since the DEIS plan is the school's improvement plan, it is important that a whole-school understanding of the link between SSE and DEIS is embedded. To support and further develop whole-school awareness of the DEIS planning process, opportunities to share expertise available within the school should be optimised.

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

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 DEIS action planning in the area of literacy is good overall. Information with regard to students' reading scores has been gathered as baseline data. This is linked to actions focused on enhancing the reading skills of students with significant difficulties in literacy development. Enhancement is primarily achieved through the implementation of additional support provided by the special educational needs department. Targeted students' reading scores are monitored in relation to this data over the course of their junior cycle studies.

The areas of digital literacy, student oracy, student writing and student achievement in English have also been identified as a focus. However, in the case of the first three of these areas, targets are not SMART and limited baseline data has been gathered. A number of actions linked to agreed targets have been proposed, but limited monitoring and evaluation of these strategies was noted. Action, using the SSE process, is required to improve these areas

A wide range of worthwhile out-of-classroom activities are being implemented. These include links to parents for reading, and the promotion and use of the very good school library. In addition, numerous embedded practices to support student literacy in classrooms were noted. Evidence of the use of these in-class strategies was observed during the evaluation. Evidence of the highlighting of literacy targets in some subject plans was noted and this very good practice should be adopted by all subject departments.

#### ***Numeracy***

Overall the quality of action planning in numeracy is good. However, some aspects require improvement. SMART targets in relation to enhancing outcomes for students have been set in numeracy and these were based on students' attainment in certificate examinations in Mathematics. The numeracy improvement plan details actions and responsibilities.

The baseline data used in devising a separate improvement plan using the SSE process, which predates the current DEIS plan, was very solid in that data was gathered from a number of sources. This approach should be used when reviewing the current numeracy plan. Strategies in the current numeracy plan do not relate to teaching and learning. This should be addressed. It was reported that some cross-curricular approaches in areas such as measurement are used. This good practice should be extended to the teaching of other mathematical concepts, and to all subject departments. The descriptor of the key skill being numerate contained in the *Framework for Junior Cycle* might be useful in informing this work.

The team-teaching practices that are used by the mathematics department will greatly assist the implementation and monitoring of the strategies selected to improve attainment. Commendably,

actions for monitoring students' progress have been identified. Progress in relation to numeracy targets from 2011-2015 is very good.

### ***Examination attainment***

Action planning for examination attainment requires improvement. The school's introduction of an academic mentoring system is central to improving examination attainment. There is evidence that an analysis of certificate examination results is undertaken at subject department level. However, this analysis has not been used to develop SMART targets. The targets set in relation to examination attainment are either not specific or are actions. Therefore, it will be difficult to evaluate progress. The school collected baseline data in 2013 and 2014 regarding students' overall performance in certificate examinations and implementation of measures was evaluated. However, such data was not used to set the targets in the current plan. It is recommended that overarching SMART targets in relation to student performance in both Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate examinations be developed. Student performance in the 2016 certificate examinations has been analysed in the context of various risk factors. However, evaluation of the impact of the measures undertaken to improve attainment was not included in this analysis. The school should discuss the current measures outlined in the plan, with a view to prioritising the implementation of those that will directly impact on examination attainment and include those, such as academic mentoring, that are already in place. Commendably, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) profile statements are being used to assist students' in their learning.

Each subject department should also set targets to consolidate and increase the number of students undertaking higher-level papers at both Junior and Leaving Certificate level and agree actions aimed at reaching these targets. A member of the senior management team should monitor subject departments' progress in relation to target-setting.

Teaching and learning ranged from good to very good in the classrooms visited, with a differentiated approach used that focused on the development of individual students' skills and knowledge. Very good formative assessment strategies were evident in a number of lessons as was the good practice of referring to the requirements of the certificate examinations.

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

Planning for these three themes and the approach to record-keeping is very good. SMART targets have been set in attendance and retention, although one target in relation to retention might be more usefully identified as an action. Targets for attendance focus on first-year students and other specific groups of students who have been identified as being at risk. Baseline data is used to inform ongoing targeted interventions. Commendably, attendance and retention are monitored each week, thus facilitating early identification of at-risk students. In addition to the home-school-community liaison (HSCL) coordinator, the school completion project (SCP) worker plays a significant role in working with at-risk students and their families. Management and staff reported that the lack of the SCP worker during the first term of this academic year had a significant impact on the support provided for at-risk students and expressed serious concern regarding the impending loss of the current SCP worker. Targets for attendance have been met or almost met during the first year of the current DEIS plan.

Targets for retention are set at a very high level and monitoring of individual at-risk students is evident. Evaluation of the impact of strategies selected and progress made, particularly in relation to at-risk students takes place. Commendably, this feeds into the annual review of targets and the selection of follow-up actions as necessary. In relation to educational progression, the school should re-examine

the targets set with a view to establishing SMART targets. This would enable the school to evaluate progress in relation to student progression more easily. It is commendable that the school has evaluated strategies in this area.

### 2.3. Partnership with parents and others

Overall, the quality of action planning for improvement in this area is very good. The school views partnership with parents as crucial to improved outcomes for students. The improvement plan for partnership with parents has three targets, including “to promote literacy and numeracy through supporting parents in their role as primary educators”. This target is very good as it aims to enhance parents’ involvement in the education of their children, through in-school initiatives. Parent-child initiatives such as “Numeracy Bakeoff” and “Chess Initiative”, organised by the HSCL, are examples of initiatives that are effective at enhancing partnership with parents.

Effective partnerships have been forged with businesses, University College Cork (UCC) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) Access programmes, and National Educational Psychologists (NEPS) among others. These have resulted in the implementation of a range of strategies which are linked to enhancing students’ attendance, retention and progression. This is very good.

It would be worthwhile to formulate SMART targets, to better reflect the good approach being taken in the area of partnership and to more easily facilitate monitoring and evaluation of progress.

## 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
<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'/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
<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'/students' 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;