

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Lanesboro Community College
School Address	Lanesboro Co Longford
Roll number	71720L

Date of Evaluation: 27-03-2017



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; 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 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

Dates of inspection	20, 23 and 27 March 2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal, deputy 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 student questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Lanesboro Community College, managed under the auspices of Longford-Westmeath Education and Training Board, 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). At the time of the evaluation there were 151 pupils 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 the following:

- The DEIS planning process and target setting have been weak and not evidence based.
- Implementation of improvement strategies has been weak as a consequence.
- Some examples of very good interventions were evident.
- The recently appointed senior management team is committed to the development of the school and to implementing significant reforms and improvements in the DEIS planning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Structures should be put in place to underpin the development of a new and comprehensive three-year DEIS plan.
- More efficient and focussed use should be made of existing and additional resources to support interventions for identified groups of students.
- Significant changes should be implemented in the operation of the HSCL and SCP schemes, and in the management of Guidance, special education and the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP).
- Given the low student enrolment, target setting in relevant areas should be in relation to individual students rather than in broad percentage terms.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING IMPROVEMENT

- Overall, the quality of leadership of DEIS has been weak. While a plan for 2012 – 2015 was prepared, there was no plan for 2015 – 2016 and only a rudimentary plan for 2016 – 2017.
- Planning for improvement is weak. It is good that some attempt to set targets has been made. However, many targets are vague or stated in terms that are not useful or meaningful.
- Most subject department folders state how the subject can contribute to DEIS and to the literacy and numeracy development of students, but actions described are not linked to targets.
- In addition, the target group of students for intervention and support is poorly defined and, consequently, implementation of DEIS planning is weak.
- While there are many good interventions in place, these are not in the context of an overall coherent plan, reducing their effectiveness and limiting the provision of follow-on activities.
- Structures should be put in place to develop a new three-year DEIS plan to be implemented from the beginning of the next school year.
- The school's rich data should be used to identify the core set of students who are at risk and on whom DEIS supports and interventions should be focussed.
- Data-based targets should be set and the actions designed to specifically achieve these targets should be implemented. Progress should be monitored, and interventions should be adapted as necessary over time.
- The efficient and effective use of resources has been weak. Targets should be set for home visits by the HSCL co-ordinator, to include following up on parents who do not attend parent-teacher meetings or other events; parents of students for whom English is an additional language (EAL); and where follow-up is needed in relation to non-response to absence text messages. The potential contribution of this work to supporting attendance and retention targets should be described in the HSCL plans.
- Mathematics classes for parents organised by the HSCL co-ordinator have been very useful, but are reaching only a very narrow range of parents. Classes in other areas should be organised following research to identify areas of interest. There should be an emphasis on including parents of target student groups to the greatest degree possible.
- The SCP project worker provides valuable in-class support to a number of students, especially in relation to EAL. But this intervention supports relatively few students, and should be provided in the context of the additional-educational-needs staffing already provided.
- SCP personnel should focus their efforts on supporting attendance and retention of DEIS target students through activities such as homework and study clubs, and lunchtime and evening activities as appropriate. While the lunch club appears to be working well, the value of the breakfast club is questionable, and additional interventions are almost non-existent. A full review of SCP interventions is recommended.
- Special education provision is a particular problem. The only model of support in use is withdrawal and this is very unsatisfactory in how it is managed. Students in junior cycle are withdrawn, for Remedial English, from only some of their Irish classes. These students remain in Irish classes on several additional occasions each week.
- Additional forms of support, such as team teaching, should be researched and implemented and additional staffing resources should be used for their designated purposes.

- All junior cycle students are enrolled in the JCSP and positive work is taking place in relation to the use of statements, postcards and profiling of third-year students. This profiling should take place every year, to monitor students' progress and enable more targeted support where needed.
- The value of the *Common Skills* classes, timetabled for all junior cycle years, is questionable. They lack a clear purpose. It is recommended that they are discontinued.
- Additional and more focussed JCSP initiatives to support literacy and numeracy are needed. These should be primarily classroom based, and in conjunction with planning for the greater use of the currently underused designated reading area.
- The transfer process from primary to second-level school and the subject-taster programme are well managed and incoming first-year students are well supported in choosing subjects. However, the structure of options and class groups favours minority subjects at the expense of weaker students. In junior cycle, for example, there are more splits and smaller class groups for optional subjects than for core subjects. Changes to curricular provision and to timetabling should be made to ensure that all students are provided for as appropriate.
- 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, Numeracy and Examination Attainment

Literacy

- The paired reading initiative is very good and many students showed improvement. However, although there is good use of comparative data, the initiative is not target based.
- There are frequent references to keywords throughout the school. However, keyword charts present in some classrooms should be updated in line with changing topics and completed charts should be retained for reference and revision.
- More support for EAL parents, and those with other literacy difficulties, through the HSCL process is desirable, to assist, for example, with completing third-level college admissions material.
- A broader approach to literacy is needed. A new literacy team should be formed, representing a variety of subjects and approaches.
- The literacy plan should be renewed with more meaningful targets, based on data available from testing and from primary schools, and actions designed to achieve identified targets should be stated.
- The implementation of additional reading interventions should be prioritised.
- Planning should also take account of students' needs in relation to oral literacy.

Numeracy

- A broader approach to numeracy is needed. A new numeracy team should be formed, representing a variety of subjects and approaches.
- This team should promote a better understanding of what numeracy means in order that its work can be progressed at whole-school level in a more informed way.

- The outcomes of the Mathematics competence test with incoming first-year students should be used to highlight areas of particular concern and to underpin numeracy planning at whole-school and Mathematics department level, and when planning special-needs interventions at individual level.

Examination Attainment

- Very good results have been achieved in certain subjects in recent years, notably the practical subjects. However, improvement plans should be put in place for other subjects.
- To date, attainment targets have been vague and not based on data. Planning for improvement in subjects is necessary at both individual student and department level.
- Expertise gained from the instructional leadership initiative should underpin improvements to teaching methodologies in the classroom.
- Direct observation suggests that there is substantial scope for the provision of more formative feedback in students' copybooks. A more consistent whole-school policy on the provision of such feedback should be developed.
- Parents stated that, frequently, insufficient homework to support good quality learning is given to students. In addition, students should be encouraged to record their homework in their journals.

2.2. Attendance, Retention, Progression

Attendance

- Data presented demonstrates no improvement in attendance over the last four years and there is a very urgent need to refocus resources on improving attendance.
- There should be enhanced follow up of absentees where necessary, for example if there are no replies to text messages.
- Patterns of non-attendance should be identified and addressed. Additional bespoke interventions should be applied to identified sub-groups causing concern.
- All teachers should engage fully with the use of information technology-based solutions to recording attendance.
- Class tutors should be appointed for all class groups to enable closer monitoring of students and to develop a closer relationship between students and the school. Tutors should monitor students' journals, and avail of opportunities to send positive comments to students' homes.

Retention

- Retention of students has been good and is one of the more successful areas of intervention. To further enhance retention, early interventions should be put in place to support identified target students.
- The compulsory nature of the Transition Year (TY) programme should be reviewed to examine the appropriateness of an additional school year for those already at risk of leaving early.
- More intensive efforts should be made to secure enrolments from local primary schools and realistic targets set for future local enrolments.

Progression

- Almost all students who enrol complete their post-primary education in Lanesboro Community College and good data is available on their initial destinations following Leaving Certificate. Equally, there is good data available on where early school leavers go.
- Informed progression choices for students should be enhanced by developing closer links with third-level colleges and availing of their access programmes.

- Students and their parents should be made aware from first year onwards of possibilities for progression to third level and deliberate efforts made to raise expectations.

2.3. Partnership with parents and others

- Very good data is available on parental attendance at school events and this should be used to identify sub-groups where further work is needed.
- Targets for improvement should be set in relation to parents where there are deficits in communication and specific interventions put in place.
- Partnerships with the local Credit Union and the Gardaí have been developed. Links to additional support services are also good.
- Links are maintained with local businesses to facilitate work experience opportunities for TY and LCVP students. These links should be recorded in planning documents.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

Lanesboro Community College, the board of management and LWETB welcome this report and are committed to building on the examples of good interventions evidenced in the report. This report has been read in detail and its findings are accepted. The report was discussed with staff and senior management in LWETB with all parties fully committed to addressing all the recommendations from the report.

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

Planning for the implementation of recommendations made in the report has taken place and a range of strategies for their implementation has been discussed and agreed. These include the following:

- A new comprehensive three-year DEIS plan will be developed by September 2017. Structures have been established to develop SMART, evidence based targets and devise improvement strategies. These strategies will inform subject department plans and will be reviewed regularly by the school leadership team.
- Senior management have discussed methods of using our current rich data to better inform DEIS planning going forward. This data will be used to best effect to identify target students and clear strategies put in place to ensure resources are made available to support these students. This will include the following:
 - SEN provision has been prioritised and a coordinated approach to the delivery of SEN support will be in place from September 2017 with resources phased in over the next 2 years.
 - A target group of DEIS students will be identified and strategies put in place to support these students.
 - Strategies to address attendance will also be implemented by September 2017.
- A significant review of the operation of the HSCL, School Completion Programme and guidance provision is currently being undertaken. Clear strategies to target individual students as well as wider school groups will be implemented to ensure maximum gain for students. Timetabled JCSP classes will be discontinued for all year groups from September 2017.

Management and staff of Lanesboro Community College are fully committed to the development of the school and in the implementation of significant reforms and improvement in the DEIS planning process.

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' 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;