

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	St. Mogue's College
School Address	Bawnboy Co Cavan
Roll number	70360C

Date of Evaluation: 12-03-2019



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.

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.

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.

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 5 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken.

DEIS Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	12-03-2019
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

Saint Mogue's College participates in the DEIS action plan. It has the services of a full-time home-school-community-liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme. At the time of the evaluation there were 216 students enrolled in the school; a number of whom are international. It offers the Junior Cycle, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) 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:

- The overall quality of leadership of the DEIS action planning process for improvement is satisfactory with improvement needed in some areas; not all targets are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART).
- The school has gathered large amounts of useful data which could be used more comprehensively in planning for targeted students.
- The DEIS core team is highly committed; however, there is no DEIS co-ordinator to assume overarching responsibility for DEIS action planning.
- Only a small number of the subject plans reviewed included effective action planning for targeted students; there is an absence of a whole-school approach to action planning.
- Attendance rates are generally good, but a high rate of unexplained absenteeism amongst a portion of the student body is undermining attempts to improve outcomes for these students.
- The school is highly effective in supporting partnership with parents and the local community.
- At the time of the evaluation the school was not compliant with a check completed in relation to child protection procedures; this related to the inclusion of a child protection oversight report (CPOR) in board minutes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- All targets should be SMART; where relevant, targets should be set by the core team for the identified targeted groups within the school.

- To ensure that a consistent, strategic approach can be developed for the DEIS action plan, the role of DEIS co-ordinator should be assigned and developed as soon as is feasible.
- In drawing up the DEIS plan teachers should focus more directly on identifying and setting specific improvement targets for attendance and include a specific target for the group whose attendance has dis-improved in recent times.
- Subject teachers should develop subject plans to include more detailed actions for DEIS interventions in the classroom in order to support the whole-school approach to action planning.
- The secretary to the board should ensure that the child protection oversight report is included on all board of management meeting agendas as set out in Circular 0081/2017.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The overall quality of leadership of action planning for improvement is satisfactory; improvement is needed in some areas.

A committed core team comprises the principal, deputy principal and three staff DEIS co-ordinators. The team communicates well with the wider school staff regarding the DEIS plan, for example through briefings at staff meetings. The school recently completed a review of the posts of responsibility, and identified the need for a DEIS co-ordinator to assume overarching responsibility for DEIS action planning. This role should be assigned and developed as soon as possible.

In order to ensure a whole-school approach to and engagement with DEIS action planning, senior management in conjunction with staff should consider the establishment of key DEIS teams involving all teachers. This will help support the planning and implementation of targets and actions at whole-school level.

A summary of key elements of the DEIS plan is presented to parents at parent evenings. The summary has not been published on the school's website to date due to technical issues, and this problem is being addressed by the school.

A valuable range of baseline data is gathered by the school. However, a particular issue for the school in gathering and analysing numerical data is the small cohort of students, which means that small variations can have a disproportionate impact on trends. The school is aware of this, and should now adjust targets accordingly to ensure that targets are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound (SMART). The large amounts of data collected by the school should also be used more comprehensively in planning for targeted students in some areas. The current DEIS plan appropriately identifies targets and actions under each theme. In some instances, however, targets have been identified as actions. This impacts significantly on the capacity to measure improvement. Greater clarity around some of the targets is needed.

Management in the main endeavours to maximise the impact of DEIS resources available however, the current arrangements for guidance provision in the school are not optimal. Currently students are provided with guidance counselling by a visiting guidance counsellor one day a week. School management is aware of this and is addressing the issue. A teacher in the school is currently completing a qualification in guidance counselling. It is important that there is clarity about the full use of the guidance provision from the start of the next academic year. A range of effective initiatives such the breakfast club and study facilities was observed during the course of the evaluation. Management actively encourage continuing professional development (CPD). Commendably, some staff have undertaken recent CPD to support the implementation of DEIS.

Subject planning documentation which was reviewed during the evaluation included a copy of the school's DEIS plan. In a small number of subject plans, departments included valuable subject-specific interventions for literacy and numeracy. These interventions however, in the majority of cases, were not clearly integrated into subject planning. School management created and shared a template with subject departments to support action planning, however, it is not consistently utilised. This should be addressed. Some measures related to classroom practice are included in the DEIS plan, although these should be more specific, where possible.

2. DEIS THEMES

2.1 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy

Overall, the quality of planning for literacy is good. There are four targets in the literacy plan; two of which are SMART and aim to improve literacy levels for junior cycle students. Very good baseline data on students' levels of achievement in reading literacy has been gathered by the special educational needs (SEN) department. Related interventions are appropriate and include a cross-border literacy project for first-year students and Words to Music. There is a need for ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of these interventions to support improvement in student outcomes.

The third target outlines the planned introduction of a reading programme. The final target aims to improve examination results at both junior and senior cycle. These targets are not SMART. The third would be more appropriately documented as an intervention, and the final target needs further development to ensure that learner outcomes are measurable. It is suggested given the cohort of international students in the school that the core team could plan a target for improved oral literacy among students for whom English is an additional language.

A few of the classroom measures identified in the literacy plan were evident in many lessons observed. Such measures include keywords to explain concepts. Additionally, an intervention associated with the development of oral language is outlined. In some lessons teachers used higher-order questioning that promoted deeper learning and encouraged discussion to support students' oral literacy; this practice should be broadened.

Numeracy

DEIS planning for numeracy is good overall. Four numeracy improvement targets have been set in the current plan; two are specific targets related to uptake of higher level Mathematics in junior and senior cycle. Uptake at higher level Mathematics has shown upward trends in recent times; however, given the small size of the cohort the school should be mindful that trends can be disproportionate from year to year. A further target relates to students' dispositions towards Mathematics and the final target is focused on student attainment. It would be useful to restate this in a way that identifies targeted students who are experiencing particular difficulties with numerical concepts. Commendably, a good range of baseline data is used to set targets.

There are many commendable interventions set out in the DEIS plan to support the implementation of the numeracy targets. The Maths department have effectively led the implementation of numeracy measures to date. The school is now broadening its focus to encompass subject-specific numeracy interventions at whole-school level which places emphasis on the role of all classroom teachers. To build on this good development it is suggested that the broader aspects of numeracy be emphasised, to broaden students' experience and understanding of numeracy related learning.

Examination attainment

The current DEIS plan has one adequate target outlined to increase students taking higher level subjects at junior and senior cycle. The development of this target is based on an analysis of examination data. This target is not SMART and improvement is needed to develop it further.

Valuable interventions are detailed in the DEIS plan that support this target. However, these interventions are predominantly focused on external supports such as evening study. It is advisable that teaching and learning strategies should be further emphasised in DEIS planning to support improvements in attainment.

The JCSP co-ordinator has worked hard to develop a good system for tracking students' attainment. The deputy principal meets with individual students to discuss attainment and target setting. Currently, year heads do not complete academic tracking. Some teachers, during the evaluation, outlined their individual process of setting targets and assessing progress with senior students. Students spoke positively of these teacher-led initiatives and indicated that these should be extended to all year groups. It is advised that senior management should develop formal procedures to support this work. The planned introduction by the guidance counsellor of academic mentoring should support this, and the year head role could be extended in this context.

2.2 Attendance, Retention, Transitions

The overall quality of planning for attendance is good, although some challenges remain. A SMART target has been outlined in the plan for improving overall attendance. While good progress has been made at a whole-school level, a specific target should be identified for the chronic non-attendeess, whose attendance is dis-improving.

There are some very good practices to reintegrate students returning from long absences. The electronic system for recording attendance has helped to track attendance more effectively. A range of means is used to collect absence notes, including giving notes to the HSCL or to one of the eleven year heads. Structures should now be tightened to ensure consistent collection of absence notes and explanations.

A second target aims to reduce the number of students' unexplained absences for more than twenty days. This target needs further refinement and should include strategies to decrease the level of absenteeism amongst this cohort. Notwithstanding, the effective work carried out by the HSCL, there is scope to improve attendance rates for these targeted students and this is recommended.

Student questionnaires responses indicated that sometimes students stay out of school when they are not sick. The school reported that some of these students engage in farm work. Commendably, measures are outlined in the DEIS plan for these students that include a module in tractor safety. Improved outcomes in terms of attendance for these students was also reported. These outcomes should be documented as part of the monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

Commendably, the school provides a range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Both students and parents in focus group interviews expressed their appreciation of the staff who assist students with extra classes and other supports.

The SCP interventions such as the breakfast club were well attended during the evaluation, although third-year students were not fully availing of the opportunities provided by after-school study. Student responses to questionnaires indicate that there is scope for greater take up of these supports and this should be explored.

A single target is currently set to maintain the high retention rates. Responses to both student and parent questionnaires indicate that the vast majority of students would like to complete their Leaving

Certificate and progress to further education and/or training. The target is supported by many interventions to support students' wellbeing and behaviour, including motivational and goal setting interventions.

The school provides good information to parents about subject and programme choice. During the evaluation students praised the wide variety of subject options available. Interactions between teachers and students were observed to be mutually respectful and student behaviour was exemplary.

The quality of planning for transitions is good overall. The school has a target to improve educational progression. This target is centred on increasing awareness about Third Level options. Very strong co-operation between the school, outside agencies and with the local seven feeder primary schools exist. Pupils in sixth classes are encouraged to attend the open days, and participate in a Science Fair and classes developed in Spanish, and Coding. The school has a specific induction programme for incoming first-years to support their transition into the school, this is supported well by the SCP and HSCL. Furthermore, good links with Dublin Institute of Technology and Cavan Institute are evident. There are very good tracking procedures in place of students who do not progress from the school to further or higher education.

2.3 Partnership with parents and others

Overall, the school is highly effective in supporting partnership with parents. Good baseline data was used to set targets in relation to partnership with parents and others. Three targets, two of which are SMART have been set to increase parental attendance at school events and their voice in the college.

The HSCL co-ordinator works hard to facilitate a broad range of supports to parents such as provision of home visits. In interviews and the survey, parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with how the school actively promotes and welcomes the inclusion of parents in the school. Worthwhile courses for parents in a variety of areas of interest are provided; attendance however, varies particularly among the targeted groups of parents. Further work to involve more targeted parents with such initiatives is recommended.

In reviewing a sample of homework journals it was noted that they are not monitored or signed regularly either at home or in school. This finding is supported by parent responses to questionnaires. However, in discussions with parents they indicated that the access to the electronic platform allows them to monitor their child's progress. The use and effectiveness of the journal as a communication tool should be investigated by the school.

Very good links have been developed with the community including local writers and artists visiting and working with the school. Additionally, links with support agencies, businesses and community groups, the local Buddhist centre and a local active age group contribute to the positive links that have been advanced.

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;