

DEIS Advisory Group Report

23rd June 2022 – Athlone Education Centre

1. Context for DEIS Advisory Group

DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools, is the Department’s main policy initiative aimed at tackling educational disadvantage in primary and post primary schools and DEIS Plan 2017, launched in February 2017, sets out the vision for future interventions in the critical area of educational disadvantage policy. It builds on what has already been achieved by schools who have benefitted from the additional supports available under the initial DEIS programme introduced in 2005.

DEIS Plan includes 5 key goals:

- the implementation of a more robust and responsive assessment framework for the identification of schools and effective resource allocation;
- to improve learning experiences and outcomes for pupils in DEIS Schools;
- to improve the capacity of schools leaders and teachers to engage, plan and deploy resources to their best advantage;
- to support and foster best practice through inter-agency collaboration;
- to support the work of schools by providing research, information, evaluation and feedback.

2. Representation at the Advisory Group

27 attendees attended the meeting of the Advisory Group including DES Officials, officials from other Government Departments, the Educational Research Centre, Teacher Unions and School Management Bodies.

3. Format of the Advisory Group Meeting.

Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary, opened the meeting with a welcome message and a recap on what has happened in the DEIS remit since the last meeting in 2019.

First to present was Carmel O’Doherty Divisional (Senior) Inspector presenting on the Inspectorate Composite Report which was published recently and available on the gov.ie website: [HERE](#).

Brian Mac Ghiolla Phádraig Assistant Chief Inspector presented on the DEIS planning process.

Micheál Killilea, Assistant Principal from SIU, presented on the DEIS Identification process and proposed next phase for DEIS

Two questions were then presented to the attendees for consideration and feedback received on the day is summarised below.

Q1. What areas of DEIS do you consider future evaluation work should focus on and why?

A discussion took place around the aspects of DEIS that could be considered for evaluation going forward.

Areas included:

- Urban vs Rural context e.g. teaching principals; teacher retention
- HSCL and SCP

- Inter-Departmental and inter-agency approaches; funding streams
- Parental empowerment and impact of DEIS
- CPD (how well its being engaged with and perceived barriers)
- Transitions and tracking between pre-school and school enrolment databases e.g. DEIS Primary to Non DEIS post-primary and visa versa
- Impact of homelessness

Q2. What is working well and what needs to be improved upon in the way the Department allocates resources to address educational disadvantage in primary and post-primary schools?

Working well:

- Maintain and improving the teacher ratio – key to success
- HSCL scheme
- School meals
- DEIS schools role in creating a community approach “hub” e.g. welfare, housing co-locations with schools
- NEPS

Needs to be improved upon

- DEIS schools multi-disciplinary teams such as guidance councillors such be well resourced.
- Inclusion supports
- Networking between DEIS schools especially after the newest expansion
- Alignment of services
- Increased counselling support
- School buildings to be made available during the school breaks e.g. Summer

Social Inclusion Unit

June 2022