

Background to the 2012 Expenditure and Statistical Survey of DEIS Schools

Following the publication of two Evaluations of DEIS in 2011 by the Educational Research Centre (ERC) and the Department's Inspectorate, information was requested in 2012 from a random selection of DEIS schools regarding their utilisation of the annual DEIS Grant in respect of the specific school year 2011/12.

Rather than examining the DEIS Grant expenditure in isolation, information was also sought on the target group, the objectives and outcomes of interventions put in place and whether they were linked into school planning and to the actions specified in Schools' DEIS Action Plans. Schools were also requested to submit their DEIS Action Plan for the 2011/12 school year.

A total of 100 DEIS schools (75 Primary and 25 Post Primary) were randomly selected for the 2012 Survey.

Information was also requested from schools on their participation in the following:

- School Meals Programme
- Free Books Grant (Book Rental)
- School Completion Programme interventions
- Literacy/Numeracy Initiatives
- Continued Professional Development

Findings of the 2012 Survey

Interventions in place on analysis of the completed Survey Forms has revealed the following:-

- Schools have put in place a wide range of interventions using the DEIS Grant.
- All schools use their DEIS Grant for HSCL activities, although in some cases, the HSCL activities are not broken down into categories such as parental courses, HSCL Coordinator expenses, Parent support.
- Approximately two thirds of schools surveyed use the DEIS Grant for sport and leisure activities, such as swimming, dance, music and arts/crafts, while one quarter use it for educational trips/transport and afterschool/homework clubs.
- Approximately half of the schools surveyed have some form of attendance tracking, while one quarter use the DEIS grant for Information and Communications Technology (ICT).
- The majority of schools use the DEIS Grant on a range of literacy/numeracy initiatives, including literacy/numeracy resources. Under the literacy/numeracy category, a number of schools use the Grant for in-service, educational assessments and testing.

General Findings

- While a wide and varying range of interventions have been put in place, a large number of Surveys have not adequately captured how effective these are at school level. While this may be attributable to the limitations of the type of study, the results clearly highlight concerns in relation to planning, target setting and outcomes, all of which determine the effectiveness of interventions put in place and use of resources provided.
- The results of the analysis suggest that a significant number of the DEIS schools surveyed may not be adhering to or may not fully understand the following when developing their DEIS Action Plans and their use of resources:
 - identify the most at risk pupils for the targeting of additional resources
 - identify the needs of the targeted pupils
 - identify the priority areas of activity to meet the needs of the targeted pupil
 - identify the desired outcomes to meet the needs of the targeted pupils
 - identify and put in place the interventions which will achieve the desired outcomes
- The findings of this survey are in keeping with the findings of the Inspectorate's 2011 evaluation of DEIS Post Primary schools in relation to planning. While the results of the survey in respect of the 75 DEIS Primary schools are marginally better than Post Primary schools in relation to interventions identified, objectives and outcomes, there is scope for improvements in the reporting of same at both primary and post primary levels. This is evident in the quality of DEIS Action Plans and the quality of data provided in the Survey Returns.

There is considerable potential for DEIS financial resources to be more appropriately targeted at the most at risk pupils in accordance with the specified actions as identified in schools' DEIS Action Plans, by identifying the needs of each of the target group and implementing interventions to suit those needs. There is also a need for an increased focus on linking input to outcomes and the importance of embedding this aspect of the DEIS programme in schools.

- This study contributes to evaluations of DEIS schools.

In accordance with Section 18 of the Education Act 1998/Section 51 of the ETB Act 2013, the Department requests that schools continue to keep record of all activities undertaken, materials, and resources purchased with grants. Accounts of income and expenditure are retained in the school/ETB, to be made available, if required, by officers of the Department of Education and Skills and/or the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.