An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Scoil Íosagáin
School Address	Sráid Seasnáin Limerick
Roll number	16910F

Date of Evaluation: 07-04-2019

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.

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.

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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

DEIS Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	07-04-2019
Inspection activities undertaken • Interview with principal and relevant staff • Examination of school's current action plans for improvement • Observation of DEIS-related activities and interventions	• Parent focus-group interview • Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires • Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Íosagáin is a twenty-two teacher primary school, which enrols boys from second to sixth class. It operates under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick and is under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). While the school is located in the centre of Limerick city, an inclusive enrolment policy ensures that pupils are drawn from a wider catchment area and from a rich variety of cultural backgrounds. The school has an administrative principal, ten mainstream teachers, seven special education teachers (SETs), two English as an Additional Language (EAL) posts, one concessionary post and one special class teacher. It participates in Band 1 of the DEIS action plan. It is the base for the services of a full-time home-school-community liaison (HSCL) coordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). At the time of the evaluation there were 193 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 overall quality of DEIS action planning for improvement is very good.
- The leadership of the DEIS action planning for improvement is very good; the principal and other leaders within the school successfully promote a culture among all staff members that focuses on the achievement of DEIS goals and targets.
- DEIS action planning for literacy is highly commendable, however there is scope to further develop language and vocabulary and provide more integrated learning opportunities for pupils with EAL.
- DEIS action planning for numeracy is of a very high quality and the development of problem solving through Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programmes is very successful.
- The attendance, retention and transitions strategies and systems are of a very high quality.
- The school has cultivated very positive relationships with parents and with a broad range of relevant agencies including community and voluntary organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The support for pupils with EAL should be provided in-class, when and where possible, and should be integrated with the support being provided for pupils with special educational needs. (SEN)
- Thematic, integrated approaches to the development of language and vocabulary should be prioritised throughout the school.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Leadership of DEIS action planning for improvement is very good. The principal and other leaders within the school promote a culture that is focused and committed to the achievement of the DEIS goals and targets. There is effective communication and collaboration between all staff members. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators successfully lead the planning and implementation of the DEIS programmes and initiatives. It is commendable that staff members have participated in a wide range of continuing professional development (CPD) to support DEIS action planning for improvement.

- Clear and detailed planning documentation is provided for each of the DEIS themes. Very effective use is made of statistical data, to provide baseline information that informs specific, measureable, attainable, realistic and time bound (SMART) targets for the school. These targets are monitored and reviewed systematically.

- A variety of initiatives is successfully implemented to support the development of pupils' wellbeing and pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. The regular monitoring of the impact and progress of these initiatives is highly commendable.

- The school's use of DEIS resources to support the agreed strategies is highly effective. Overall, classrooms are very well resourced.

2. DEIS THEMES

2.1 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy

- The quality of DEIS action planning for literacy is very good. The school has identified SMART targets to raise reading standards for pupils throughout the school. The targets have been devised through a detailed analysis of school data and matched to a broad range of interventions including *First Steps, Reading for Fun and Literacy Lift Off*.

- Additional support for pupils with EAL is focused and intensive. Support is provided on a withdrawal basis initially. It should be provided in-class, when and where possible, and should be integrated with the support being provided for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Thematic, integrated language approaches should be developed to strengthen pupils' acquisition and use of language.

- The implementation of initiatives on a whole-school basis is very good. There are consistent strategies and actions such as station teaching and small group literacy instruction (SGLI) which are implemented systematically across the school. The school's investment in books, resources and graded readers is praiseworthy.

- The school's use of baseline data to analyse the effectiveness of the various literacy initiatives is highly commendable. Improvements in pupils' attainments in literacy are evident. Training has been provided for teachers in using running records and various forms of assessments.

- The school provides a print-rich environment. While each class setting has an established class library, there is scope to make these more stimulating and attractive by providing a richer choice of reading material. The school is making great efforts to focus on pupils with language needs. It is recommended that the school place a greater emphasis on the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary for each curricular area.

Numeracy

- The quality of action planning for improvement in numeracy is very good and is impacting positively on pupils' learning. SMART targets have been identified and appropriate and detailed strategies for improvement have been selected for each target over the three years. The targets place commendable emphasis on problem-solving and focus on specific strands of the mathematics curriculum. Teachers implement a wide range of initiatives to improve learner outcomes for pupils in numeracy. These include *Maths Recovery*, team teaching, LEGO and engagement in various competitions.

- The differentiated provision for pupils through small-group instruction and station teaching is praiseworthy. This is facilitated through the use of the SETs and the discretionary post holder for numeracy allocated to the school. Learning experiences for pupils are tailored to meet individual pupils' needs.

- The development of problem-solving across the school is commendable. Charts, resources and teaching aids support pupils as they develop and use their problem-solving skills. Individualised targeted programmes, based on individual pupils' results in each strand area of the mathematics curriculum have been developed and informs teachers' planning. Each pupil's progress is monitored on an ongoing basis and teachers noted that the agreed actions are being successful in raising pupils' attainment in the subject.

- Senior pupils are being provided with a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) experience through a robotics programme which is relevant and challenging for them. They have the opportunity to design and build a robot. The pupils develop skills in collaboration and teamwork. Pupils in the middle classes work with LEGO software which supports them in their STEM learning. This work is highly effective in developing mathematical skills.

2 Attendance, Retention, Transitions

- The overall quality of action planning for improvement in the areas of attendance, retention and transitions is very good. A strategic whole-school approach to attendance has been adopted and pupils are rewarded for good attendance. Evidence-based and specific targets, relevant to different cohorts of pupils have been set for attendance. Absences and attendance patterns are monitored rigorously. The statistics show significant improvement in attendance overall. Substantial efforts have been put in place to reduce the absentee rate of a small and

targeted cohort. Initiatives are focused to boost attendance which include the creation of a lunch time club and the organisation of music classes for this group.

- The school successfully sets ambitious targets to support the transition and the retention of all pupils in education. Strategies in place to support this include supporting parents to complete enrolment forms for the post-primary schools, the implementation of a transition programme and the provision of a wide range of afterschool activities such as sports, computers and a homework club. It is noteworthy that all parents report in parent questionnaires distributed as part of the evaluation that their child will progress to secondary school. Almost all pupils in their responses to pupil questionnaires also reported that they will progress to post-primary education. All sixth class pupils have transferred successfully to post-primary education since 2015. The impact of the school's DEIS action planning for attendance, retention and progression has proven successful.

- A very positive, collaborative working relationship has been established between the SCP worker and the HSCL coordinator and their work in supporting attendance, transition and retention of pupils is commendable. The school provides a well-run breakfast club each morning and the SCP worker is highly praised for the organisation of trips for pupils during holidays. The school's provision of *Friends for Life, Roots of Empathy and Incredible Years* programmes is supporting pupils' safety and wellbeing in school. All pupils engage enthusiastically in the activities and lessons organised.

2.3 Partnership with parents and others

- The quality of the DEIS action planning to support partnership with parents and other professionals and agencies in supporting pupils in the school is very good. Specific and measureable targets have been devised to integrate new families into the school community. Realistic and attainable targets have been set to improve communication between the school and the parent body through the provision of information in a variety of languages. The school has thirty different nationalities and twenty eight different languages spoken among the parent population.

- The school participates in the Embracing Diversity, Nurturing Integration, Learning for Life (EDNIP) partnership initiative, which aims to promote and support migrant integration into five DEIS schools in Limerick city. Numerous events such as a winter celebration, art exhibition and sports registration morning have been organised with the support of the board of management and parents' association to strengthen the integration process for new families to the school and the city. The school has also cultivated very positive relationships with a broad range of agencies which provide supports for pupils.

- The work of the HSCL co-ordinator in supporting home-school partnerships is highly effective. Interventions and aligned to targets for partnership with parents. She visits families regularly and encourages parents to actively participate in a variety of courses and activities organised by the school to support their integration into the school community. While a high proportion of the school's enrolment are learning EAL, courses provided for parents should be differentiated to enable parents learn English and participate in the courses based on their language needs. Other activities currently organised for parents include the parent and toddler group, baking, art, health and beauty.

- The principal's skill in fostering good relationships with the entire school community is particularly praiseworthy. It is evident from the responses to the parent questionnaires and comments from the parents during the focus-group discussion that parents hold the school in

high regard. The school is welcoming to parents and it provides information booklets in a range of languages. It is noteworthy that almost all parents reported that they feel welcome in the school.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

We at Scoil Íosagáin are delighted that some of our hard work was acknowledged and will strive to improve in all areas, especially those highlighted for improvement.

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

We plan to address the recommendations in the following ways:

1) Integrate EAL into the SEN setting and provide more in class support.
2) Have a thematic approach to language and build it into our next DEIS Plan.

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 *very good* 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;