An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

DEIS EVALUATION

REPORT

School Name	Stanhope Street Primary School
School Address	Manor Street Stoneybatter Dublin 7
Roll number	09932B

Date of Evaluation: 09-10-2019

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 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(s) of inspection	09-10-2019
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

Stanhope Street Primary School participates in Band 1 of Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. It has 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 337 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:

- DEIS action-planning processes for improvement are very effective and staff demonstrate very high commitment to the needs of all pupils; aspects of the DEIS planning documentation need refinement.
- The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is very good; teacher collaboration, peer observation and whole-school approaches are highly commendable.
- Educational leadership, as demonstrated by the principal and senior management, is exemplary and staff are praised for the stimulating, vibrant and attractive learning environments which celebrate pupils' achievements and promote agreed whole-school strategies across the DEIS themes.
- Assessment and screening practices across the school are outstanding; data is analysed and used very effectively to establish baselines, monitor progress and demonstrate improvement of pupils through a highly individualised process.
- A range of initiatives to improve pupil attendance is well implemented; further strategies and measures are needed to target the cohort of pupils most at risk of non-attendance.
- The quality of DEIS planning to support the partnership with parents is effective; however, parental involvement could be further developed through HSCL links with home and in-school initiatives.
- While many aspects of the HSCL role are of a high standard, the extent of home visits and aspects of record keeping do not align with the provisions of circular 16/2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Target setting in DEIS planning documentation should optimise the use of the school's comprehensive data and utilise it to create SMART targets for all themes.
- Management should ensure the HSCL role aligns fully with circular 16/2019 most notably in respect of the portion of the role given to home visits and to records in respect of accountability and reporting.
- The introduction of a Breakfast Club is advocated as a means of promoting further improvement in attendance and punctuality.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The quality of leadership and coherence of the action planning for improvement process is very good. A culture of self-evaluation is well-established in the school. This has contributed to the delivery of the curriculum and to the selection, implementation and development of valuable support programmes. Educational leadership, as demonstrated by the principal and senior management, is exemplary. This leadership is very successful in respect of guiding practices and developing collective approaches. The implementation of strategies on a whole-school basis is excellent and very much targeted towards priority needs. The systems devised by the school for monitoring and evaluating the impact and progress achieved through this implementation are outstanding. There are very clear improvements and maintenance of successes. There is scope for improvement in certain aspects of written documentation. In the present DEIS plan some targets are SMART, some others are not and require further clarity and focus to optimise the impact of the very good quality teaching that was observed. Target setting should be linked more directly to analysis of the school's comprehensive data, utilising it to create SMART targets for all themes.

The effectiveness of the school's use of continuous professional development (CPD) to support action planning for improvement is at a very high level; teacher modelling and sharing of practice are among its strong features. The school plans very effectively for the improvement of pupil wellbeing and pupil voice is very much respected in the school. The initiatives implemented under the School Completion Programme (SCP), which include life-skills development, contribute notably to this. Interaction with the pupils revealed a prevailing opinion among them that staff members have great empathy and respect for pupils attending the school. During a focus group meeting with parents, this was echoed strongly; parents present shared the view that they have great trust in the school.

Assessment and screening practices across the school are outstanding; data is analysed and used very effectively to establish baselines, monitor progress and demonstrate improvement of pupils through a highly individualised process. From junior infants to sixth class, detailed individual assessment profiles on every child are maintained. Assessment folders reflect clearly a trajectory of learning in the key areas of DEIS planning. Teachers utilise this data actively to inform forward planning.

The effectiveness and efficiency of use of the DEIS resources is commendable overall. Certain aspects of the home-school-community liaison (HSCL) role need to be optimised now, however. Many aspects of HSCL work are of a high standard, most notably the personable engagements of the co-ordinator

and thorough attention to transitions, but the amounts of home visits and aspects of record keeping do not align with the provisions of circular 16/2019. There is need for their development. At the present time the school does not implement a Breakfast Club. The introduction of a Breakfast Club to contribute to promoting further improvements in attendance and punctuality should be considered strongly.

Changes in the context of the school, with substantial increases of pupils enrolling with needs in English as an Additional Language (EAL), have added to the overall variety of challenges for this school. As a part of its comprehensive school improvement planning, there is need to plan strategically for specific CPD for teachers in respect of EAL and for support through more effective connection with parents.

2. DEIS THEMES

2.1 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy

The quality of planning for improvement in literacy is very good and the quality of the implementation of strategies and approaches and the outcomes achieved are very good. All classroom environments are language-focused and very well prepared in support of learning language. The overall school environment is very good and its deployment of resources for literacy is very good. The school library is worthy of particular commendation; it is an inspirational space. The school's implementation and embedding of initiatives are very good. Initiatives, including Power Hour and programmes, most notably Reading Recovery are chosen very well, informed by assessment and tailored well to pupils' needs. The outcomes achieved in literacy are very good, and evidenced by comprehensive data. The school participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP) and makes very good use of the resources it provides. These supporting and vibrant literacy initiatives and assisted homework club are highly successful. There is great demand for these courses. During the evaluation, parents in a focus-group interview formally requested that additional places be made available for pupils in these initiatives. The strongest consideration should be given to facilitating this wish.

Numeracy

The quality of planning for improvement in numeracy is very good and the implementation of strategies and the outcomes achieved is very good. The explicit focus on developing the pupils' understanding of the language of Mathematics is very good and evident in teacher planning and practice. New methodologies have been modelled and disseminated. All environments are number-rich and concrete materials are used for discovery learning. The school is to be commended highly for its careful analysis of data to inform its implementation of targeted mathematics initiatives to support pupils. Lessons and special-intervention programmes observed included Maths Recovery, maths stations and Ready Set Go Maths. Engagements with pupils were of a very good quality and characterised by specific planning and careful differentiation of lesson objectives for target pupils. Expertise in these initiatives is informing cross-school practice.

2.2 Attendance, Retention, Transitions

The school has been successful in implementing a range of strategies to encourage attendance across the school as a whole, most significantly through ensuring highly stimulating teaching and learning activity. Other very positive preventative measures in place in relation to pupil absenteeism include

the public celebration and charting of full attendance, the creation of a positive learning climate throughout the school and the holding of prize-giving events and assemblies. Overall, attendance is good and has been maintained in a stable way over the past number of years. Consultation meetings among school personnel have aided the school community in effectively targeting pupils who could be at risk of non-attendance.

A very high percentage of sixth-class pupils, who completed a questionnaire as part of this evaluation, reported that they liked coming to school and all parents who completed a questionnaire stated that their children liked going to school. In relation to targeted pupils who present with lower attendance levels, the implementation of additional measures should now be considered. Among these could be introduction of a breakfast club and additional home visits specifically in relation to attendance.

The school maintains strong links with a range of community services and with local primary and post-primary schools and early years' education providers. Full retention is achieved and well-embedded systems have facilitated this. The transfer of pupils to second-level education is tracked very carefully and in a highly structured way. Both pupils and parents demonstrated a very high positive disposition towards continuing education, in their questionnaire responses.

2.3 Partnership with parents and others

The school has been successful in implementing a range of strategies to involve parents and other agencies in the life of the school. Parents who participated in the focus-group interview were highly appreciative of the work of the school, of the commitment of the teachers and staff approachability. Parent representatives spoke of having enormous pride in the school. Welcome is at the heart of the work of the school and evidence from a range of sources bore out this out strongly. Parents' representatives spoke of being very trusting of the school and expressed how confident their children are as a result of the work of the school. A range of different courses is facilitated for parents. The focus group of parents reported satisfaction with courses and activities offered specifically to parents at present. They also stated they would welcome new courses to provide them with insights into how children learn and opportunities to take a more formal role in supporting learning during the school day. These should be facilitated. Parent questionnaire responses were very positive overall, in respect of the school with the welcome provided by its staff highlighted particularly. Very effective links are forged with a variety of agencies in the community including SUAS, Barnardos and An Garda Síochána. These positive links promote the holistic development of all pupils and support interventions aimed at developing the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management and staff are delighted that the high standards of professional practices in the school and the commitment of the staff have been acknowledged, recognised and affirmed by the Evaluation Team. We are particularly pleased that the ethos of welcome which is fundamental to the work of the school, was given particular mention. We are very happy that the holistic development of the pupils and the trust that parents have in the school was also noted.

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

The Board notes the recommendation to ensure that all targets in the written DEIS plans are SMART and will establish a committee to ensure that the documentation is refined so that targets are SMART.

The portion of the role of the HSLC given to home visits and records will be reviewed to ensure compliance with circular 16/2019. The introduction of a breakfast club, initially on a trial basis, will be carefully considered as a means to further improve attendance and punctuality. New courses to provide parents with insights into how children learn and opportunities to take a more formal role in supporting learning during the day, will be also be explored.

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;

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