

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

**DEIS EVALUATION**

**REPORT**

<b>School Name</b>	Corran College
<b>School Address</b>	Ballymote, Co. Sligo
<b>Roll number</b>	72300R

**Date of Evaluation: 25 November 2016**



## **WHAT IS A DEIS EVALUATION?**

In 2005 the Department published *DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools): An Action Plan for Educational Inclusion*. The aim of this action plan is to ensure that the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities are met.

Schools are expected to develop action plans for improvement in the following areas (referred to as the DEIS themes): attendance; retention; educational progression; literacy; numeracy; partnership with parents; partnership with other schools and educational providers, and with external agencies. 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	21 November to 25 November 2016
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Examination of school's current action plans for improvement</li><li>• Observation of DEIS-related activities and interventions</li><li>• Student focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent focus-group interview</li><li>• Analysis of parent and student questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Interaction with students</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li><li>• Review of documentation</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Corran College has participated in the DEIS action plan since 2008. It has the services of a part-time home school community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). It offers the Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme and the established Leaving Certificate. At the time of the evaluation there were 92 post-primary students enrolled in the school. Corran College is a co-educational school under the trusteeship of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

The following key findings arise from this evaluation:

- The senior management team operates very effectively and has a very clear focus on strategic planning for improvement.
- The action plan has clearly defined targets and strategies to support improvement in teaching, learning and assessment practices.
- A wide range of data sources, including standardised tests, certificate examination results and surveys of students, parents and staff, has been used to gather baseline data for setting SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) targets.
- The school staff's evident care for students is expressed through well-planned and effectively implemented initiatives and interventions.
- Students and parents demonstrate high levels of positivity about the school.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key recommendations arise from this evaluation:

- Teachers should be enabled to undertake responsibility for monitoring the individual DEIS themes and senior management should concentrate on co-ordinating and leading the overall DEIS plan.

- Yearly targets, in addition to three-year targets, should be used to ensure the targets are relevant for each particular cohort of students.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. DEIS ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT PROCESS**

The senior management team operates very effectively and has a very clear focus on strategic planning for improvement. Time is allocated regularly for the purpose of DEIS planning and relevant whole school in-service has been provided. DEIS resources are managed effectively and efficiently to support the selected strategies. The DEIS target groups have been identified using specific criteria and the criteria are reviewed and updated regularly. The principal and deputy principal take the lead role in tracking and co-ordinating progress under each of the DEIS themes. To further develop the whole-school nature of DEIS action planning, it is recommended that responsibility for monitoring progress and outcomes under each theme be undertaken a designated staff member and that senior management focus on co-ordinating and leading the overall plan.

The quality of implementation of actions and the monitoring of progress and outcomes was found to be good overall. A wide range of data sources, including standardised tests, certificate examination results and surveys of students, parents and staff, has been used to gather baseline data for setting SMART targets. Commendably, strategic actions are clearly linked to these targets. It is recommended that yearly targets, as well as three-year targets, which recognise the particular cohort of students in each year group, should be used. Also, in the context of the small size of the student population, using student numbers as opposed to percentages would be more effective.

Teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the whole-school strategies integral to the DEIS action plan. Many of these strategies were observed in lessons such as the sharing of learning intentions and success criteria, use of comment-only marking and facilitation of collaborative learning. Common subject planning templates are utilised to incorporate some of the DEIS themes. It is suggested that this good practice be extended and methodologies specifically linked to DEIS targets be included to a greater extent.

Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools (2011)* without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2011)*.

### **2. DEIS THEMES**

#### **2.1. Literacy and Numeracy and Examination Attainment**

- The quality of DEIS action planning in the area of literacy is good.
- Seven targets have been set in the 2014-2017 literacy plan, with some targets focusing on particular year groups. Robust baseline data using standardised tests has been gathered to inform targets, and a wide range of appropriate strategies has been selected to achieve

these targets. Reading initiatives, such as the reading challenge and linking with the local library, have had measureable success.

- The action plan has clearly defined targets and strategies to support improvement in teaching, learning and assessment practices.
- A vocabulary enrichment programme has recently been introduced in first year which should lead to additional literacy support within the school. To ensure the effectiveness of this strategy, it is recommended that its progress be continuously monitored and reviewed when necessary.
- The quality of planning for enhancing students' numeracy development is good.
- Five targets have been set. Evidence has been gathered in relation to both the numerical competencies and the attitudes of students.
- A link teacher for numeracy has been appointed and has received training for the role.
- A number of whole-school numeracy strategies have been adopted. Of particular note is a paired learning initiative whereby fifth-year students provide assistance to a number of first-year students.
- Last year a mathematics course for first year parents was organised by the HSCL co-ordinator with parents from other schools also attending. The programme was designed to involve parents in their child's learning of Mathematics. While initially popular, attendance at the course decreased and as a result it is not being facilitated this year.
- Each subject department has presented to all staff in relation to numeracy in the relevant subject and this has led to a whole-school focus on numeracy. The effectiveness of this initiative should be monitored and reviewed to ensure there is a consistent approach to in-class strategies as experienced by students.
- DEIS action planning in the area of examination attainment is very good.
- Improving examination attainment is a driving force in the senior management team's engagement with DEIS planning and significant progress has been made in recent years.
- Six SMART targets associated with this theme have been identified.
- Subject-specific improvement plans have been developed with targets in relation to improving certificate examinations in all subjects. The use of aggregated data from a number of years of certificate examination results may provide further useful information and could present a more realistic picture of progression in this area. To take account of the small size of the student population, basing targets on the number of students instead of using percentage-based targets is likely to provide a more useful reflection of progress.
- Parents are updated regularly on student progress and have access to an online system to retrieve assessment, attendance and behaviour data.

## 2.2. Attendance, Retention, Progression

- Action planning in the area of attendance, retention and progression is very good.
- Great efforts are invested in attendance recording and monitoring. Strong recognition of the rewards for attendance was expressed in both student and parent surveys. There is a student-of-the-month award as well as awards for full attendance and for those who have missed five days or less.
- An electronic attendance monitoring system is in place and was observed to be in widespread use throughout lesson observations.
- A texting system is in place to communicate with parents if a student is absent. This system was reported to be working very effectively by the parents interviewed.

- One attendance initiative was observed which promotes attendance in junior classes, and also factors in students who are late and who leave school early. To help evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative, it is recommended that an associated target be developed in relation to junior-cycle attendance.
- The school's code of behaviour endeavours to promote a positive student environment. Good student behaviour and an atmosphere of mutual respect were evident in all classes visited.
- The school's pastoral care team functions very effectively to support at-risk students and their families. It ensures efficient co-ordination and communication between in-school and external supports.
- Guidance is a timetabled subject for all senior-cycle students and there are targeted interventions for junior-cycle students. There is one qualified guidance counsellor on the staff and another staff member is currently up-skilling; this is supported by school management.
- The school welcomes and supports students of all abilities and very good practices are in place to enable students with special education needs (SEN) to progress both academically and socially. SEN provision is primarily through small group withdrawal and a number of teachers have reported considerable success in the use of team teaching.
- A transfer programme operates for first-year students through the SCP and this programme links with the local primary schools with the aim of helping students adjust to post-primary school.

### 2.3. Partnership with parents and others

- The quality of action planning and implementation in the area of partnership with parents is good.
- The school views partnership with parents as crucial to improved outcomes for students. Through the surveys and interviews, parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with school management and their commitment to DEIS.
- Considerable work is carried out by the SCP, both in promoting partnerships with external agencies and in the delivery of programmes in the school. The school completion project worker visits the school one day per week and links very effectively with all school staff.
- Through the SCP the school offers summer activities to a targeted group of students. Some after-school initiatives have also been organised to support students at risk of dropping out of education.
- Lunches are provided on a subsidised basis and this provision is highly valued by parents and students.
- Good communication systems are in place including internal email, a texting system for parents and a well-designed school website.
- Good links have been forged with the local community, local business and Sligo Institute of Technology for the purpose of supporting students' progression through and beyond school.

## 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 the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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 students' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;