EVALUATING DEIS IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS?

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ELEMENTS OF DEIS POST-PRIMARY

• Improved staffing schedule

• Additional financial support

• Access to *Home School Community Liaison services*

• Access to *Schools Meals Programme*

• Access to a range of supports under *School Completion Programme*

• Access to Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP)
Some JCSP schools have a library
Access to Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA)
Access to planning supports
Access to a range of professional development supports
Additional funding under School Books Grant Scheme

(Source: DES Website, 2013)
EVALUATION

Focus: Examining
- implementation (the match between what was intended and what is happening at the level of the system and at school level)
- outcomes

Activities
• What Students Think (Survey of 1st and 3rd Years)
• School visits
• School questionnaires
• Analysis of centrally held data (e.g., exams, retention rates)
THIS PRESENTATION

- Two aspects of implementation (1 national and 1 local)
- The opinions and experiences of principals and researchers
- Trends in centrally held data
UPTAKE OF PROGRAMMES

• Shortly after the introduction of DEIS, the number of schools with JSCP libraries went from 10 to 30.

• Our data indicate that the policy of opening JCSP libraries in schools with highest concentrations of disadvantage has been reasonably successfully implemented.
Before DEIS, the number of schools with students taking JCSP hovered around 130 for about 4 years.

Since 2006/07, the number has risen steadily to between 200 and 210.

All but one of the 70 (approx.) extra JSCP schools are in DEIS.

LCA participation has also been affected by the introduction of DEIS but to a much smaller extent than JCSP.
PLANNING

• By school year 2012/13, almost 90% of participating schools had completed a DEIS plan (a majority doing so between 2008 and 2010).

• All plans contained specific targets across a range of areas with a focus on literacy, numeracy, retention and attendance.

• All but 2 or 3 school principals reported progress in relation to stated targets.

• Principals are overwhelmingly positive about the planning process while acknowledging drawbacks and obstacles.

• Inclusive (whole-school) approach to planning is favoured.

• Greater engagement in planning than that reported in 2010 by inspectorate.
WHAT PRINCIPALS THINK ABOUT DEIS

• Universal positivity about all elements of DEIS

• Despite deteriorating socioeconomic context, principals reported improved
  - Retention
  - Exam performance
  - Literacy and numeracy
  - Attendance
  - Transfer to 3rd level

• Negative feedback mainly reflects concerns about resourcing
IMPRESSIONS OF THOSE OF US WHO VISITED SCHOOLS

• We thought that we got ‘a feel’ for the overall atmosphere in about two-thirds of schools

• In most of the other third, contact was almost entirely with the principal

• Positives seen in almost all schools including
  - Enthusiastic engagement with planning
  - Team work
  - Flexibility in use of resources
  - Strong pastoral care
Many DEIS schools are entitled to be regarded as ‘trail blazers’ in terms of planning and self evaluation

Challenges faced very evident
- Scale of marginalization
- Resistance to change among a very small minority of staff
- Impact of enrolment policies and practices
TRENDS OVER TIME IN ACHIEVEMENT & RETENTION LEVELS

- Academic Achievement
  - Junior Certificate Overall Performance Score
  - Junior Certificate English
  - Junior Certificate Maths

- Retention Levels
  - Retention to Junior Certificate
  - Retention to Leaving Certificate
TRENDS OVER TIME

Schools
- 704 schools in total

- 200 ‘SSP’ schools
  - Enlisted into SSP in 2006 / 2007

- 504 ‘Non-SSP’ schools
  - Did not participate in SSP
TRENDS OVER TIME: JC EXAM PERFORMANCE AND RETENTION

- Evidence of a significant trend over time?
- Evidence of differing trends for SSP & Non-SSP schools?
- Evidence that the introduction of DEIS in 2006 / 2007 had an impact on trends over time?
## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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<th>Ordinary</th>
<th>Foundation</th>
<th>OPS score</th>
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**Overall Performance Score** (Kellaghan & Dwan, 1995)
Number is assigned to each letter grade
OPS score for best 7 subjects summed to give OPS
MEAN JC OPS FROM 2002 TO 2011
### Mean JC OPS from 2002 to 2011

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<td>2010</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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![Graph showing mean OPS from 2002 to 2011](image)
MEAN JC ENGLISH SCORES FROM 2002 TO 2011
MEAN JC ENGLISH SCORES FROM 2002 TO 2011
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RETENTION TO JC

Retention to Junior Cert

Cohort refers to Year of Entry
1995 cohort entered second level in 1995 & left 5 / 6 years later
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RETENTION TO JC

Retention to Junior Cert

Cohort

Percentage


82.00
84.00
86.00
88.00
90.00
92.00
94.00
96.00
98.00
100.00

All Schools
Non-SSP
SSP
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RETENTION TO JC

Retention to Junior Cert

- All Schools
- Non-SSP
- SSP
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RETENTION TO LC

Cohort refers to Year of Entry

Leaving Cert Retention

- All Schools
- Non-SSP
- SSP

Cohort refers to Year of Entry
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RETENTION TO LC

Leaving Cert Retention

Cohort refers to Year of Entry
Evidence of a significant trend over time?
- Yes
- SSP & Non-SSP on all variables
  • Exception of JC Retention for Non-SSP

Evidence of differing trends for SSP & Non-SSP schools?
- Yes
- SSP schools trends of greater magnitude
  • Junior Certificate OPS
  • Retention to JC & LC
Evidence that the introduction of DEIS in 2006 / 2007 had an impact on trends over time (i.e., were these years associated with change in trend)?

- Yes, in JC achievement (OPS & English scores)
- Difficult to interpret in relation to retention to JC & LC
OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

• High levels of implementation have been achieved
• Great variation in the scale of challenge faced by participating schools
• Improved outcomes in terms of achievement and attainment have been observed although they remain well below ‘national norms
• Not possible to attribute, with confidence, improvement to DEIS and certainly not to particular aspects of DEIS
• Differences between DEIS and its predecessors need to be carefully considered
• Differences between schools in terms of outcomes and levels of implementation will be examined
• Return on investment in DEIS likely to improve
• Monitoring progress in DEIS should continue, preferably as part of formal evaluation.