



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Review of Resourcing Schools to Address Educational Disadvantage in Ireland

OECD Education for Inclusive Societies project

Social Inclusion Unit
15th July 2024



Rationale for the review

DEIS Plan: Action 4

New resource allocation model developed for application to all DEIS school support programme schools to include a more tailored system of resource allocation, within which there are more grades of disadvantage identified and resources allocated accordingly in response to the needs of individual schools.

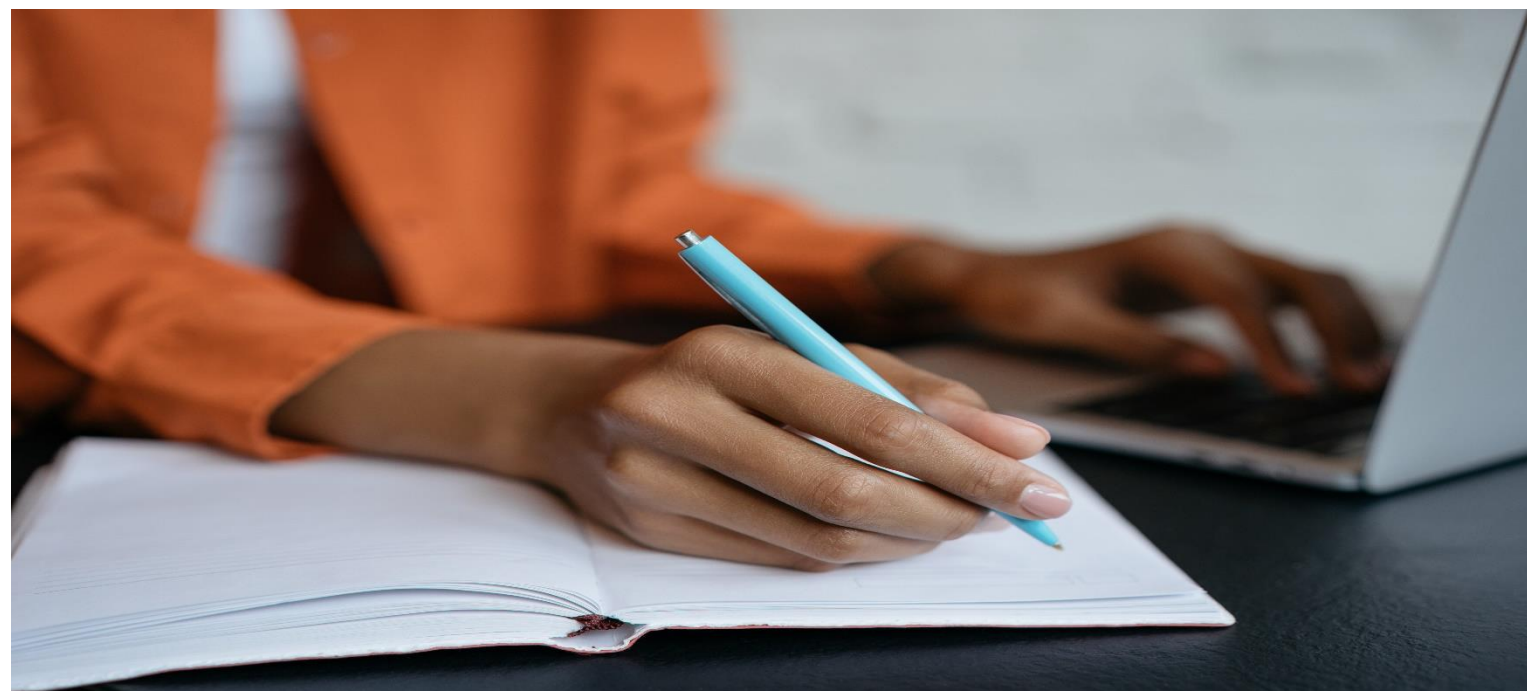


Aim of the review

- **Not a review of the DEIS programme**
- Aim of the review is to:
 - a. provide an independent expert opinion on the current resource allocation model for the DEIS programme.
 - b. draw on international examples, to inform a policy approach for an equitable distribution of supplementary resources to support students at risk of educational disadvantage attending all schools, both DEIS and non-DEIS.

OECD Education for Inclusive Societies project

- Help governments and relevant stakeholders to achieve more equitable and inclusive education systems as a pillar to create more inclusive societies
- Policy questions:
 - 1) *How can education systems effectively support the learning and well-being needs of all learners throughout life, especially the most vulnerable?*
 - (2) *How can equity in education foster the development of more inclusive societies?*



Review structure

- Desktop research – Irish and international research and evaluations
- Development of a Country Background Report by Department of Education
- Online engagement with stakeholders between 27 June and 26 July 2023
- Country visit between 18 and 22 September 2023
- In person stakeholder meetings
- Visits to six schools – met school leaders, staff, parents and children
- Overall, 36 meetings with approximately 60 stakeholders and visits six schools serving 2,890 students.



Review structure

The review team considered five priority areas:

Governance

Resourcing

Capacity
building

School-level
interventions

Monitoring
and
evaluation



Governance

The review team found:

- a strong commitment to addressing educational disadvantage through the DEIS programme.
- a strong focus on stakeholder engagement in policy making.
- a focus on sharing of good practice promoted by the Department but could be a more formal approach.
- more co-ordination in providing health and therapeutic services to children and young people is required.

Recommendations:

- Strengthening collaboration across departments and agencies
- Building on the sharing of good practices within the education system.

Resourcing

The review team found:

- the universal resources provided by the State to all schools are equitable and not negatively impacted by disadvantage, but parents are often required to pay a voluntary contribution towards the running of the school.
- the use of the HP Index for the identification of needs enhances trust and support for DEIS but its validity could be further enhanced.
- earmarking and conditionality of DEIS resourcing ensures schools undertake an adequate multidimensional tackling of disadvantage.
- the banding structure for the DEIS programme results in a large difference in the levels of support to schools.

Recommendations

- Review and monitor the cost of education and its impact on families
- Continue to refine the indicators of disadvantage and allocation approach, to allow for a less rigid, more dynamic model that can adapt to changing needs.
- Consider the supports for all children and young people at risk of educational disadvantage



Capacity building

The review team found:

- additional teaching resources, leadership resources and action planning process are a benefit to many DEIS schools.
- initial teacher training prepares teachers to support disadvantaged students.
- professional learning is responsive to the local needs of teachers and of DEIS schools, but multiple factors limit teachers' engagement.
- continuing the emphasis on informal learning and communities of practice can strengthen capacity.
- staff shortages and limited diversity across a range of positions create a challenging context for both DEIS and non-DEIS schools to meet learners' needs.
- high levels of students' needs are placing a strain on the entire support system and DEIS schools are particularly affected by limited capacity to provide the holistic approach required.



Recommendations

- Address staff shortages
- Support participation in professional learning
- Focus capacity building efforts on priority areas both in and around the most disadvantaged schools



School-level interventions

The review team found:

- DEIS supports are viewed positively and widely sought, however non-DEIS schools may not have the adequate supports to support their disadvantaged students.
- literacy and numeracy programmes are a unique feature of the DEIS programme.
- DEIS supports demonstrate a holistic approach to addressing educational disadvantage, however, there is an unmet need for assessments and therapies for children and young people.
- both DEIS and non-DEIS schools promote engagement with parents and the wider community, however, schools without access to the HSCL scheme may not have resources and capacity for this engagement.
- the provision of certain services for many schools rely on teachers or parents volunteering their time and significant costs for families.
- perceived supports, such as reduced school days and exemptions from Irish, can limit future opportunities of students.

Recommendations

- Strengthening equity in the provision of resources across schools
- Strengthening coordination of education and health and therapy provision
- Review costs of education to families
- Promote promising models of engagement and collaboration with parents, families and communities



Monitoring and evaluation

The review team found:

- Ireland has strong expertise in monitoring and evaluation, through quantitative and qualitative sources, regarding DEIS.
- the system emphasises the role of self-evaluation for school improvement.
- the Inspectorate serves a vital role in school evaluation.
- there is a limited use of granular and combined administrative data to better understand individual level outcomes, rather than school level outcomes.
- there is an absence of evaluations on the causal implications of the DEIS programme.
- schools may not have the capacity to fully utilise the range of data available to them for planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Recommendations

- Enhance the educational system's efforts and capability to utilise detailed data
- Promote research methods that could provide more information on the causal effects



Next steps

- Consider this report in conjunction with:
 1. the Department's analysis on existing resources
 2. information from consultations.
- Identify if there are any immediate actions that can be taken.
- Further deliberative process in autumn, involving stakeholders, to develop recommendations into actions.





Thank you
Go raibh maith agaibh

