

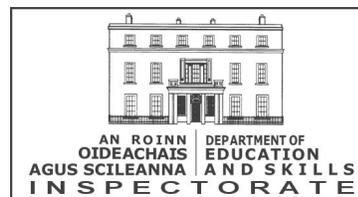
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Follow-Through Inspection
REPORT**

**Holy Family Community School
Rathcoole, County Dublin
Uimhir rolla: 91301D**

Date of inspection: 3 March 2015



Date of original inspection¹	26 September 2013	Type of original report	WSE MLL	Date of FT inspection	3 March 2015
Report published	Yes				
Follow-through inspection activities					
<p><i>The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection</i></p> <p>Meeting with principal and deputy principal Meeting with relevant teachers/members of staff Observation of teaching and learning Review of school documentation and students' work Communication with chairperson of board of management</p>					
Recommendation in original inspection report		Progress achieved to date on implementation of recommendation			
The board should formally document a strategic plan outlining the short, medium and long-term goals for the school's development.		Good progress has been made on this recommendation. A draft strategic plan has been developed. A planning framework has also been developed. Improvements in teaching and learning have been identified as a priority area. Consultation with the school community is ongoing in relation to strategic issues. Short, medium and long term goals have been drafted. An action plan for the achievement of these strategic goals needs to be put in place.			
First-year students should be assigned to mixed-ability base class groups and should remain in these groups for their junior cycle years.		Very good progress has been made on this recommendation. This is highly commended. First-year students have been assigned to mixed-ability groupings. The experience of other schools was sought. This valuable evidence influenced the decision to change to mixed-ability groupings. Consultation with staff and parents was central to this very important initiative. Management and staff are very satisfied with the impact of this change on learning and teaching.			
The very good work of subject departments should extend discussion at subject department meetings to include teaching methodologies, lessons planning and classroom practice.		Good progress has been made on this recommendation. Subject department meetings and the programme for teacher continuous professional development (CPD) have prioritised teaching and learning especially in relation to more active methodologies and more student engagement. A number of teachers are providing valuable leadership in this area. In a sample of lessons visited there was evidence of good progress. However, further work is needed to continue to imbed the principles of assessment for learning (AfL) at a whole-school level.			
The responses to the student and parent questionnaires that were part of this evaluation should be investigated further as part of the school improvement process.		Partial progress has been made on the responses to questionnaires. Management has closely analysed responses. As a result more information has been provided in relation to subject choice. The parent and student questionnaires need to be revisited to further assess their implications.			
Significantly more opportunities should be provided for students to actively engage in lessons. Differentiated learning strategies should be provided for students to actively engage in lessons. Best practice in relation to the correction of students' work and the provision of advice on how to improve should be more consistent across the school.		<p>Good progress has been made on this recommendation. Management has provided opportunities for CPD in order to promote activity-based teaching and learning, AfL and strategies to address differentiation. The school has received support from the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).</p> <p>In the lessons visited there was good evidence of active engagement of students. Merit cards are given for good student work. There was room for improvement in the provision of written advice by teachers on students' copybook work. In some cases there was scope for the improved use of more directed questioning towards individual students.</p>			

Summary of findings

School management and teachers are commended for the way that they have addressed many of the recommendations. Embracing the challenge of switching to mixed-ability groupings in first year is highly commended. The prioritisation of improvements in teaching and learning at subject meetings, at whole-school level and in CPD is evident. However, there is room for improvement in the correction of students' written work and in some cases in teachers' questioning strategies.

Recommendations

It is recommended that there be a greater focus on the correction of written work by teachers with a greater emphasis on giving students clear advice on how to improve their work. Continued work on the imbedding of AfL principles on a whole-school basis is also recommended. The completion of a strategic plan is also required.

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.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report.

The Board of Management welcomes the positive feedback in the WSE-MLL Follow-Through Inspection Report. The Board is pleased that the prioritisation of improvements in teaching and learning at subject meetings, at whole-school level and in CPD was acknowledged. The Board is particularly pleased that the challenge of switching to mixed-ability groupings in first year was acknowledged and that the teachers were highly commended for embracing this challenge.

Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

- The Board is continuing to work on its strategic plan in consultation with the school community.
- The Board will continue to provide CPD for staff to support mixed-ability teaching and AFL.
- The Board has requested that staff take cognisance of the recommendations re questioning strategies and correction of students' work and continue the work of imbedding AFL principles at whole school level.
- The Board will revisit the responses to the student and parent questionnaires as part of the school improvement process.