An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Sancta Maria College
Louisburgh
Co Mayo

64660F

FREAGAIRT SCOILE / SCHOOL RESPONSE

FREAGAIR LAISTIGH DE DHEICH LÁ SCOILE / RESPOND WITHIN TEN SCHOOL DAYS

DÁTA FILLTE / RETURN DATE: 14/09/2026

Chuig/To: Áine Moran, Príomhoide/Principal

Cc: Dominic Feeney, Cathaoirleach BB/Chairperson BoM

CEIST , Pátrún na scoile/ School Patron

Dáta/Date: 08/07/2026

A chara,

Gheobhaidh tú faoi iamh an tuairisc dheiridh de chigireacht a rinneadh i do scoil. Tá cóip den tuairisc á seoladh chuig an bpríomhoide, chuig cathaoirleach an bhoird bhainistíochta agus chuig pátrún nó iontaobhaithe na scoile (nó príomhfheidhmeannach an bhoird oideachais agus oiliúna) ar aon dul leis na forálacha atá sna *Treoirlínte um Fhoilsiú Tuairiscí Cigireachta Scoile* (arna n-athbhreithniú in 2015) agus i *Rialacháin an Achta Oideachais, 1998 (Foilsiú Tuairiscí Cigireachta ar Scoileanna agus ar Lárionaid Oideachais), 2015*. D'fhéadfadh an tuairisc a bheith ar fáil i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla, de réir teanga teagaisc na scoile.

Tarraingítear d'aird ar Chaibidil 3 de na Treoirlínte go háirithe, áit a bhfuil amchlár leagtha amach d'éisiúnt na tuairisce. Ceadaítear **deich lá scoile le haghaidh an Fhoirm Freagartha Scoile a chur ar ais** (faoi iamh).

A chara,

Please find attached the final report of a recent inspection undertaken in your school. This copy of the report is being sent to the principal, to the chairperson of the board of management and to the school's patron or trustees (or the chief executive of the Education and Training Board) in line with the provisions contained in *Guidelines* for the *Publication of School Inspection Reports* (Revised 2015) and *Education Act 1998 (Publication of Inspection Reports on Schools and Centres for Education) Regulations 2015.* Depending on the language of instruction in your school, the inspection report may be available in both Irish and English.

Your attention is drawn in particular to Chapter 3 of the *Guidelines*, where the timeframes are set out. These allow **ten school days for the return of the School Response Form** (attached).

Dáileadh na tuairisce
Foráiltear le Rannán 3 de na *Treoirlínte* go gcuirfidh cathaoirleach an bhoird bhainistíochta nó duine atá údaraithe aige/aici cóip den tuairisc ar fáil do gach múinteoir a mbaineann an chuairt leo agus do na baill den bhord bainistíochta (féach Rannán 3.3 de na *Treoirlínte*). Ba cheart é sin a dhéanamh láithreach.

Freagairt scoile
Déanann Cuid 3.4 de na Treoirlínte cur síos ar an tslí inar féidir leis an mBord Bainistíochta freagairt don tuairisc. Ba cheart freagairt na scoile a chur isteach ar Fhoirm Freagartha Scoile na Tuairisce Cigireachta trí ríomhphost chuig reports_inspectorate@education.gov.ie **roimh an spriocdháta thuasluaite**.

Tá cóip leictreonach ar fáil sa chuid Foirmeacha Scoile den leathanach Tuarascálacha Cigireachta atá ar fáil faoin Oideachas ar https://www.gov.ie/ga/foirm/foirmeacha/

Agus é ag freagairt, féadfaidh an bord ceann **amháin** de na roghanna seo a leanas a roghnú:

- **ROGHA A:** Féadfaidh an bord glacadh leis an tuairisc gan barúil a thabhairt. Sa chás seo, ba chóir do chathaoirleach an bhoird Rogha A den Fhoirm don Fhreagairt ar Thuairisc na Cigireachta a roghnú, an fhoirm a shíniú agus a chur ar ais ar ríomhphost chuig an seoladh thíos.

- **ROGHA B:** Féadfar gur mian leis an mBord freagairt go foirmiúil don tuairisc. Sa chás seo, ba chóir don Chathaoirleach Rogha B ar an bhFoirm do Fhreagairt na Scoile ar Thuairisc na Cigireachta a roghnú agus Freagairt na Scoile a chur sna boscaí atá ar fáil. Ba chóir don Chathaoirleach an fhoirm a shíniú ansin agus í a chur ar ais ar ríomhphost chuig an seoladh thíos.

Tá treoir maidir le freagairt scoile a scríobh i Rannán 3.5 de na *Treoirlínte.* Is éard atá sa fhreagairt scoile ná deis don scoil barúil a thabhairt ar **ábhar** na tuairisce agus béim a leagan ar na **bearta leantacha** a bhfuil ar intinn aici iad a dhéanamh (nó atá déanta aici

Distribution of the report
Section 3 of the *Guidelines* provides that the chairperson of the board of management or a person authorised by him/her will provide a copy of the report to all teachers affected by the visit and to the members of the board of management, (see Section 3.3 of the *Guidelines*). This should be done immediately.

School response
Section 3.4 of the *Guidelines* outlines how the board of management can respond to the report. The school's response should be submitted on an *Inspection Report School Response Form* and returned by email to reports_inspectorate@education.gov.ie reports **before the due date outlined above.**

An electronic copy is available in the School Forms section of the Inspectorate Reports page which is available under Education on https://www.gov.ie/en/form/inspection-report-forms/

When responding, the board may choose **one** of the following options:

- **OPTION A:** The board may accept the report without comment. In this case, the chairperson of the board should choose Option A on the *Inspection Report School Response Form*, sign the form and return it by email to the address below.

- **OPTION B:** The board may wish to respond formally to the report. In this case, the chairperson should choose Option B on the *Inspection Report School Response Form and include the School Response in the boxes provided. The chairperson should then sign the form* and return it by email to the address below.

Guidance on writing a school response is contained in Section 3.5 of the *Guidelines*. The school response is an opportunity for the school to comment on the **contents** of the report and to highlight the **follow-up actions** which it proposes to take (or has already taken) following the visit. Please note that comments on the **process** or **reference to the Inspector** should not be included in the school response

cheana féin) tar éis na cigireachta. Tabhair faoi deara nár cheart barúlacha ar an b**próiseas** ná **tagairt don Chigire** a chur san áireamh sa fhreagairt scoile. NÍ cóir focail bhuíochais d'fhoirne scoile, don fhoireann chigireachta ná do dhaoine eile a bheith san áireamh. Níor cheart níos mó ná **500 focal** san iomlán a bheith sa fhreagairt scoile.

I gcás rogha A nó B, ba chóir do chathaoirleach an bhoird Foirm Freagartha Scoile na Tuairisce Cigireachta a sheoladh ar ais trí ríomhphost chuig an seoladh thíosluaithe roimh an spriocdháta thuasluaite. I gcás scoileanna atá ag feidhmiú faoi choimirce Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna, ní mór an Fhoirm Freagartha Scoile a bheith comhlánaithe i gcomhairle le príomhfheidhmeannach an Bhoird Oideachais agus Oiliúna.

- **ROGHA C:** D'fhéadfadh an bord bheith míshásta leis an tuairisc agus/nó leis an gcigireacht agus féadfaidh sé athbhreithniú ar an gcigireacht a iarraidh faoin *Nós imeachta maidir le hathbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar chigireachtaí a dhéanann Cigireacht na Roinne Oideachais faoi Alt 13(9) den Acht Oideachais 1998* (arna leasú in 2022). Sa chás sin, ba cheart don chathaoirleach athbhreithniú a iarraidh trí scriobh chuig an Priomhchigire, An Roinn Oideachais, Sráid Mhaoilbhríde, Baile Átha Cliath 1, DOI RC96. **Ní mór an t-iarratas ar athbhreithniú a bheith faighte ag an bPríomh-Chigire roimh an spriocdháta thuasluaite.** Tá cóip den *Nós Imeachta um Athbhreithniú* ar fáil ar shuíomh Gréasáin na Roinne.

Gan freagairt

Más rud é nach bhfaightear comhfhreagras ar bith i dtaca le Freagairt Scoile agus nach bhfaightear iarratas ar athbhreithniú faoin *Nós Imeachta um Athbhreithniú* roimh an spriocdháta thuasluaite, glacfar leis nach mian leis an mbord bainistíochta freagairt a dhéanamh agus ullmhófar an tuairisc lena foilsiú agus/nó lena heisiúint chuig an scoil ansin.

Expressions of thanks to school staffs, the inspector or others should not be included. The total length of the school response should not exceed **500 words**.

In the case of Option A or Option B, the *Inspection Report School Response Form* should be returned by the chairperson of the board by email to the address below before the due date outlined above. In schools operating under the auspices of an Education and Training Board (ETB), the School Response Form must be completed in consultation with the chief executive of the ETB.

- **OPTION C:** The board may be dissatisfied with the report and/or the visit and may seek a review of under *Procedure for Review of Inspections carried out by the Department of Education Inspectorate under Section 13 (9) of the Education Act 1998* (revised 2022). In this case, the chairperson should request a review by writing to the Chief Inspector, Department of Education, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, DOI RC96. **The request for a review must be received by the Chief Inspector before the due date outlined above.** A copy of the *Procedure for Review* is available on the website of the Department.

No reply

If no correspondence is received in respect of a School Response and if a request for a review under the *Procedure for Review of* has not been received before the due date, it will be assumed that the board of management does not wish to make a response and the report will then be prepared for publication and/or issued to the school.

Foilsiú/Eisiúint na tuairisce
Tar éis an *Fhoirm Freagartha Scoile* a fháil, ullmhóidh an Chigireacht an tuairisc chigireachta scoile le foilsiú/eisiúint don scoil. De ghnáth, cuirfear cóip den Fhreagairt Scoile san áireamh sa leagan foilsithe den tuairisc nó sa leagan a eisíodh don scoil. Más rud é go roghnaíonn an Roinn gan an Fhreagairt Scoile a fhoilsiú/a chur san áireamh sa tuairisc ar chúis ar bith, cuirfidh sí an bord bainistíochta ar an eolas faoin gcinneadh sin agus faoin gcúis leis.

Ba cheart foirmeacha a sheoladh trí ríomhphost chuig:
reports_inspectorate@education.gov.ie

Is mise le meas,
Margaret OGrady

Pp: Martin Whyte
Príomh-Chigire Cúnta

Publication/Issue of the report
Following receipt of the *School Response Form*, the Inspectorate will prepare the school inspection report for publication/issue to the school. Normally, a copy of the School Response will be included in the published version of the report or the version issued to the school. If for any reason, the Department opts not to publish/include the School Response with the report, it will inform the board of management of this decision and the reason for it.

Forms should be emailed to:
reports_inspectorate@education.gov.ie

Is mise, le meas,
Margaret OGrady

Pp: Martin Whyte
Assistant Chief Inspector

Foirm Freagartha Scoile na Tuairisce Cigireachta

Ba cheart foirmeacha a sheoladh trí ríomhphost chuig:
reports_inspectorate@education.gov.ie

Ainm agus seoladh na scoile:	Sancta Maria College Louisburgh Co Mayo 64660F
Cineál cigireachta	WSEMLLPP a sheoladh ar 24/02/2026
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce	08/07/2026
Don oifig amháin	Uimhir cigireachta: 46235

Roghnaigh rogha A, B nó C

ROGHA A	Glacann an bord leis gurb í an tuairisc an tuairisc chigireachta dheiridh atá le foilsiú agus ní mian leis freagairt go foirmiúil don tuairisc.	

ROGHA B	Glacann an bord leis gurb í an tuairisc an tuairisc chigireachta dheiridh atá le foilsiú agus is mian leis freagairt go foirmiúil don tuairisc. Aontaíonn an Bord go gcuirfear an fhreagairt atá curtha isteach san áireamh mar aguisín leis an tuairisc fhoilsithe. Tá freagairt an bhoird curtha isteach thíos.	*

ROGHA C	Ní ghlacann an bord leis gurb í an tuairisc an tuairisc chigireachta dheiridh agus tá sé ag déanamh iarratas ar athbhreithniú ar an gcigireacht faoin *Nós imeachta maidir le hathbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar chigireachtaí a dhéanann Cigireacht na Roinne Oideachais faoi Alt 13(9) den Acht Oideachais 1998.* Cuirfidh an bord iarratas i scríbhinn isteach/tá iarratas i scríbhinn curtha isteach ag an mbord ar athbhreithniú chuig Oifig an Phríomh-Chigire.	

Freagairt scoile: Cuid A
Tabhair barúil i dtaobh ábhar na tuairisce cigireachta (tuairim is 100-150 focal)

The Board of Management welcomes this highly positive evaluation, which affirms the quality of teaching and learning, leadership and management, and the school's outstanding commitment to student wellbeing. The report recognises the strong sense of community, the positive and inclusive learning environment, the commitment of staff to continuous professional learning, and the culture of respect and care that underpins all aspects of school life. The Board is particularly pleased that the report acknowledges the school's distributed leadership, strong partnerships with parents and the wider community, and the extensive opportunities provided for students to flourish academically, socially and creatively. The Board also welcomes the constructive recommendations contained in the report and is committed to supporting their implementation as part of the school's ongoing programme of continuous improvement.

Freagairt scoile: Cuid B

Luaigh na bearta atá déanta ag an scoil nó a bhfuil ar intinn aici iad a dhéanamh chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar gach ceann de na moltaí sa tuairisc (tuairim is 350-400 focal)

Síniú

Cathaoirleach, an Bord Bainistíochta	*Ainm i gcló:*
	Síniú:
	Dáta:

Ní mór an fhoirm seo a bheith sínithe ag cathaoirleach bhord bainistíochta na scoile. I gcás

comhlánaithe ag cathaoirleach an bhoird bhainistíochta i gcomhairle le Príomhfheidhmeannach (nó oifigeach ainmnithe) an Bhoird Oideachais agus Oiliúna.

Ní mór an fhoirm a chur ar ais chuig Rúnaíocht na Cigireachta laistigh deich lá scoile ó dháta eisiúna na tuairisce deiridh le haghaidh freagairt scoile.

Inspection Report School Response Form

Forms should be emailed to: **reports_inspectorate@education.gov.ie**

School details	Sancta Maria College Louisburgh Co Mayo 64660F
Inspection details	WSEMLLPP conducted on 24/02/2026
Date of issue of inspection report	08/07/2026
For office use	Inspection Number: 46235

Please choose option A, or B, or C

OPTION A	The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for final issue and does not wish to respond formally to the report	

OPTION B	The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for final issue and wishes to respond formally to the report. The Board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the final report. The board's response is submitted below.	*

OPTION C	The board does not accept the report as the final inspection report and is making a request for a review of the inspection under the *Procedure for the review of inspections carried out by the Department of Education Inspectorate under Section 13(9) of the Education Act 1998.* The board will submit/has submitted a written request for a review to the Office of the Chief Inspector.	

School response: Part A

Please comment on the content of the inspection report (approximately 100-150 words)

The Board of Management welcomes this highly positive evaluation, which affirms the quality of teaching and learning, leadership and management, and the school's outstanding commitment to student wellbeing. The report recognises the strong sense of community, the positive and inclusive learning environment, the commitment of staff to continuous professional learning, and the culture of respect and care that underpins all aspects of school life. The Board is particularly pleased that the report acknowledges the school's distributed leadership, strong partnerships with parents and the wider community, and the extensive opportunities provided for students to flourish academically, socially and creatively. The Board also welcomes the constructive recommendations contained in the report and is committed to supporting their implementation as part of the school's ongoing programme of continuous improvement.

School response: Part B

Please indicate the actions that the school has taken or plans to take to address each of the recommendations in the report (approximately 350 -400 words)

The Board will support senior management in further strengthening teaching, learning and assessment by building on existing effective practices through collaborative professional learning, peer observation and the continued development of the Teacher Handbook to promote consistency across the school.

To support the redevelopment of Senior Cycle, the school has appointed a Senior Cycle Reform Co-ordinator who will lead the streamlining of assessment and project work, facilitate the sharing of effective practice across subject departments and inform the ongoing review of whole-school assessment policy.

The Board welcomes the recommendations relating to special educational needs and will support the continued development of Student Support Plans through regular review with students and parents. Whole-staff professional learning on the updated SEN and Autism Good Practice Guidelines will be provided, together with Board training to support its statutory oversight responsibilities in relation to Circular 0064/2024.

The Board also supports the development of a whole-school policy for first-year assessment arrangements to ensure clarity and consistency for students, parents and staff.

Finally, the recommendations arising from this evaluation will be incorporated into the school's next Strategic Plan and School Self-Evaluation process. Clear actions, timelines and measures of success will be identified to ensure that the school continues to build on the many strengths recognised in this highly positive evaluation.

Signature

Chairperson, Board of Management	*Print name:* Dominic Feeney
	Signature:
	Date: 4 August 2026

This form must be signed by the chairperson of the board of management of the school. In the case of a school operating under the auspices of an Education and Training Board, the form must be completed by the chairperson of the board of management in consultation with the Chief Executive (or nominated officer) of the Education and Training Board.

The form must be returned to the Inspectorate Secretariat within ten schools days of the date of issue of the final report for school response.

An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT FOR SCHOOL RESPONSE

Ainm na scoile/School name	Sancta Maria College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Louisburgh, Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	64660F
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	24/02/2026
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	08/07/2026

What is a whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning?

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning reports on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. It affirms good practice and makes recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Quality of school leadership and management
2. Quality of teaching and learning
3. Quality of support for students' wellbeing

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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. The name of the DLP and the child safeguarding statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS.
2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.
4. The school's child safeguarding statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025.
5. The minutes of the last three board of management meetings contain a child protection oversight report in line with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of Bí Cineálta, it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it.
2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and students.
3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of Bí Cineálta.
4. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment.
5. All staff visited report that they have read the school's Bí Cineálta policy and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.</td></tr>
</table>

information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025. 7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE) 8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location	

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Dates of inspection	09/02/2026 – 11/02/2026
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with Board of Management • Meetings with principal and deputy principal • Meetings with key staff • Review of relevant documents • Student focus group	• Meeting with parents • Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires • Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of students' work • Interaction with students • Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers

School context

Sancta Maria College is a co-educational post-primary school under the trusteeship of Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST) located in Louisburgh in County Mayo. Enrolment stood at 557 at the time of the evaluation.

The school offered the Junior Cycle, including Level Two Learning Programmes (L2LPs); an optional Transition Year (TY) programme; the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE). Among the supports provided by the school are two special classes for students with identified needs.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good. Quality ranged from very good in most of the lessons observed to good in the remaining lessons.
- Some very good practices were noted during the evaluation in relation to lesson structure and pacing, and in the use of success criteria and formative feedback to support students in improving their own work.
- The overall quality of leadership and management was very good, with examples of excellent practice noted. Senior management brought a wealth of leadership experience and expertise to bear on their work. They had a shared vision of the school as a place where student voice and support are key drivers of decision making, and where there is engagement with parents and the wider community.
- A key strength of the school was the strong sense of community, supported by a positive, affirming and productive learning environment; school leaders modelled and promoted a culture of respect, which was underpinned by the school ethos.
- The school had developed a range of structures and systems to support students with identified educational needs. Further developments in this area are now needed.
- A warm, welcoming working and learning environment had been developed in the school. This included the installation of bespoke wall art and display boards to communicate the school's ethos, its coastal location, and the affirmation of a school culture that celebrated neurodiversity and creativity. Individual staff members are highly commended for their work in renovating or creating attractive spaces for learning.
- Very positive student-teacher relationships were observed, with success noted in the communication of CEIST values.
- The overall quality of support for students' wellbeing was excellent; this was reflected in the school timetable, learning environments and student support structures.

Recommendations

- Teachers should be facilitated by senior management in sharing strategies for the planning of effective teaching and learning in one-hour lessons and in the use of success criteria and formative feedback to support students in improving their own work. These practices should be documented and incorporated into the existing teacher handbook.
- Senior management should provide opportunities for teachers of subjects where project work is an established part of formal assessment and teachers of Tranche 1 senior cycle subjects to share their project-management experiences with all colleagues. This should inform the development of revised whole-school assessment practices and policy.
- Student Support Plans (SSPs) should be further developed by the special educational needs (SEN) team, with regular review of progress in relation to learning targets with the relevant students and their parents/guardians.
- The school should facilitate a presentation by the SEN team to all staff on *Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes* (updated 2024) and *Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools*. A version of that input should also be provided to the board of management, to develop its understanding of the annual review it is now required to conduct of the school's special education teaching allocation, in accordance with Department of Education and Youth Circular 64/2024.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning was very good in most of the lessons observed and was of a good standard in the remaining lessons.

Learner outcomes and experiences

During the evaluation there was a very positive, respectful and affirming rapport between teachers and students, which contributed to a safe and productive learning environment. There were high levels of motivation, engagement, and curiosity in most lessons. Almost all students surveyed as part of this evaluation agreed they were getting on well with their learning. In the lessons observed, learners had the necessary knowledge and skills to understand themselves and demonstrate their knowledge.

Learner experiences were enriched by teachers' varied methodologies, which included the activation of prior learning, distributed questioning, the use of different stimuli to develop curiosity, and opportunities for pair and group work. Learners engaged purposefully in well-planned learning activities. In most lessons, students were guided and encouraged to be creative in their approaches, enquiries and tasks. This was observed through enquiry-based learning, active learning,and workshop and movement activities.

The development of students' key skills was notably supported by in-school initiatives such as the annual Science Fair, where second-year students presented their classroom-based assessment (CBA) projects to external judges for explanation and awards.Guest speakers, outings and school trips provided students with a wide range of varied experiences, which is commendable.

Learning intentions were shared with students in almost all of the lessons observed, and this engaged students in their learning. In the most effective instances, teachers ensured that there was ring-fenced time before the end of a lesson, so that the learning intentions could be revisited and co-assessed with students. This helped teachers identify the aspects that students had achieved and elements that needed to be revisited.

The school is commended on achieving its *Apple Distinguished School Award* in September 2025, a reflection of the commitment and hard work that teachers and students had invested in

developing their digital skills. Digital technologies were integrated usefully in many lessons observed for teacher demonstration, presentation, and student research. Effective use was made of the school's shared online platform where class resources and links were shared. This commendable practice should be developed by teachers to support students who are absent or are representing the school at official external events.

Teachers individual and collective practice

Teachers demonstrated high levels of subject expertise. All teachers had planned effectively for their lessons. This included the preparation of presentations, worksheets and resource materials.

Very good practices were observed when teachers shared key learning with students, provided differentiated task options and used real-world examples and events. Students of all abilities were supported when lessons were interactive and collaborative. Notably, teachers regularly moved among students during task time to provide one-to-one support as needed.

In the majority of lessons, there was effective planning, with timing of segments communicated to students at the outset. There was a good balance of teacher input with pair and group opportunities for students. In a few instances, teacher instruction dominated, or there was little planning for variety in methodology, resulting in some learners becoming disengaged. Senior management should facilitate teachers in sharing strategies for the planning of effective teaching and learning in one-hour lessons and in the use of success criteria and formative feedback to support students in improving their own work. The re-activation of the school's peer observation programme could be helpful in this regard, as well as formal whole-staff presentations by volunteer teachers. These practices should be documented and incorporated into the existing teacher handbook. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) publication *Movement Breaks in the Classroom – A Resource for Post-Primary Schools* (2020) would be a valuable resource for subject teachers to explore at future department meetings.

The quality of assessment was very good overall, with practices ranging from good to excellent in the lessons observed. Formative feedback was the school self-evaluation (SSE) focus that the school had previously worked on. A whole-school input from an external speaker on the topic was facilitated to support implementation. It was evident that some very useful strategies were used in this regard by individual teachers, particularly around digital feedback and the sharing and co-construction of success criteria. However, in some lessons there were further opportunities to share success criteria and feedback to support student improvement. To ensure greater consistency for students, it is also recommended that teachers share highly effective assessment practices and record them in the teacher handbook.

2. Quality of school leadership and management

The overall quality of leadership and management was very good, with examples of excellent practice noted.

Leading learning and teaching

Senior management brought a wealth of leadership experience and expertise to bear on their work, gained from working in different schools and jurisdictions. They had a shared vision of a school as a place where student voice and support, along with parents and the wider community were key drivers of decision making.

A very broad and balanced range of junior cycle and senior cycle subject and programme options was available to students. In first year, students studied all core and optional subjects for the year. A school review of this year-long approach had been undertaken. School management is advised to lead the development of a policy explaining the assessment arrangements for this first-year programme in relation to homework expectations, formal assessment and reporting arrangements. Ensuring that all parents, students, and teachers are clear on expectations is necessary, particularly when students made the decision not to continue with subjects into second year.

A warm, welcoming working and learning environment had been developed in the school. This included the installation of bespoke wall art and display boards that communicated the school's ethos, its coastal location, and affirmation of a school culture that celebrated neurodiversity and creativity. Individual school staff members are highly commended for their work in renovating or creating attractive spaces for learning.

Senior management were very supportive of teacher professional learning. Through staff training days, inputs from external agencies, attending conferences and regular lunchtime TeachMeets, a culture of curiosity and professional development was nurtured. All of the teachers surveyed agreed they were encouraged to avail of professional development. The teacher handbook, formal staff meetings and the school's shared online platform should be utilised as opportunities to strengthen the collective culture and further support consistency of practice.

High levels of teacher collaboration and communication were evident during the evaluation and were facilitated through the shared online platform. High-quality subject planning was noted during the evaluation. A range of subject plans was reviewed as part of the evaluation. All department plans were available on the online platform for cross-departmental sharing. Best practices were noted when department meetings allowed time for discussion and reflection on teaching, learning and assessment, along with procedural and organisational issues.

A teaching and learning committee had been established by senior management and had representation from across a range of subjects. A post of responsibility for subject planning had been developed to assist in leading consistent and high-quality subject planning. In the context of senior cycle redevelopment, senior management should provide opportunities for teachers of subjects where project work is an established part of formal assessment and teachers of Tranche 1 senior cycle subjects to share their project-management experiences with all colleagues. This should inform the development of revised whole-school assessment practices and policy.

Managing the organisation

The quality of managing the organisation was very good. The senior management team demonstrated high levels of commitment and worked very effectively as a cohesive unit. The principal held annual meetings with post-holders and subject co-ordinators, which supported a culture of ongoing review.

The board of management was highly supportive of the school's development. Minutes of board meetings reviewed demonstrated oversight of key areas of school life. A sub-committee within the board also regularly monitored school finances. Commendably, the principal's reports to the board were structured around key domains in *Looking at our School 2022*. This helped the board become familiar with the quality standards for schools. Regular inputs to board meetings from teachers, middle management and students ensured the board were aware and updated on the day-to-day working of the school. To build on this very good practice, the board should invite inputs from teachers involved in SEN and in senior cycle redevelopment.

Excellent systems for communication had been developed, including a school website, a weekly digital newsletter for parents, an online Padlet with accessible links to school policies and procedures, and a recently developed teacher handbook. Parents and members of the board appreciated the regular communication.

The school had developed a range of structures and systems to support students with identified educational needs. A core team of teachers with specialist qualifications had been developed. Students with places in the special classes had link teachers who co-ordinated their Student Support Plans. A detailed register of students receiving support was developed by the SEN co-ordinator and shared with all teachers. The school deployed its special educational teaching support hours through a combination of team teaching, literacy and numeracy support, and some interventions for students with emerging needs, along with time for administration and testing for the SEN co-ordinator. Improvements in two areas are recommended. First, Student Support Plans should be further developed, with regular review of progress in relation to learning targets with the relevant students and their parents/guardians. Second, the school should facilitate a presentation by the special educational needs team to all staff on *Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes* (updated 2024) and *Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools*. A

version of that input should also be provided to the board of management, to develop its understanding of the annual review it is now required to conduct of the school's special education teaching allocation, in accordance with Department of Education and Youth Circular 64/2024. The school's SEN policy should be revised in line with the 2024 Guidelines and Circular requirements.

Time and energy had been invested by senior management, year heads, and key post-holders in devising positive, supportive student management systems. The Monday morning assembly worked well to communicate key messages related to ethos and school events. A House Points system allocated students in the same class groups to one of four school Houses, mixing students across the year groups. The school's code of behaviour was very clear, and a points system had been developed to address both positive and negative behaviours.

Leading school development

The overall quality of leading school development was very good. In 2021, the current senior management team were appointed and prioritised an intensive consultation process with all stakeholders. A clear strategic plan was generated for 2023-2026. At the time of the evaluation, it was evident that very good progress had been achieved on meeting a number of those targets.

A key focus for school development was in establishing new subject choice offerings to students, in particular at senior cycle including Drama, Film and Theatre Studies and Technology. The range of subjects offered by the school should be kept under review in line with changing allocations and enrolment trends.

Along with the school's strategic planning process, the school had worked to progress improvement through school self-evaluation (SSE). Formative assessment and feedback were a key SSE focus in recent years and senior management had put clear strategies in place. The current focus of SSE on creativity connected effectively with the school's participation in the School of Excellence Creativity Award. Senior management should develop strong links and connections between the school's next strategic plan and the ongoing SSE process. Clear targets should be developed and set in order to monitor evaluation for impact.

Strong links had been established with the local community. Regular communication with all stakeholders was evident. The school had recently taken over the lease of a nearby building and renovated it to serve as a "Creativity Centre" for arts-related lessons. The school's partnership with feeder schools was very good, facilitating a successful induction programme for new students to provide for very positive transitions from primary school.

Engagement with parents was very positive, and the parents' association played an active role in supporting school activities. Communication systems ensured that parents were well informed, and information evenings were available for parents both online and in person. Policies were shared with parents for review and feedback, and parents who completed the survey felt the school was well run.

Developing leadership capacity

The quality of developing leadership capacity was excellent. The senior management team developed capacity among teachers to lead identified priorities and were mindful of connecting teachers' strengths to key leadership areas in the school.

Senior management and teachers worked collaboratively and communicated effectively. Teachers were encouraged to access regular professional learning and attended relevant conferences. Teachers were empowered to share learning with their peers through regular staff meetings and the school's online platform. Distributed leadership opportunities for teachers were promoted and supported very effectively. Post-holders' work was reviewed regularly with the principal and they had opportunities to report to the board on their work.

The school provided a range of formal student leadership opportunities through the student council, prefects, student mentoring, and student-led talks to their peers on topics of their choosing. This included a recent StudentMeet on dyslexia. The student council met regularly under the guidance of their link teacher and it was very positive that the students had opportunities to present to the board. Students had opportunities to engage in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, further developing their leadership capacity. Focus-group

participants were very grateful for the variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities organised for students.

3. Quality of support for students' wellbeing

The quality of support for students' wellbeing was excellent. A whole-school approach to student wellbeing was promoted by senior management, where pastoral care was the shared responsibility of all teachers. High priority was placed on creating a positive school climate where all students felt a sense of safety and belonging.

Students were very well supported at times of transition. Visits to local primary schools and open evenings were facilitated and parents were given the option to attend sessions online or in person. During the focus group meeting, students felt the school supported their wellbeing by creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. Students surveyed agreed that there was a good atmosphere in the school. Regular student support team (SST) meetings were held and minutes were recorded.

The school supported student wellbeing through the provision of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities and awareness days which had a significant positive impact on students' experiences. Senior management also led several whole-school wellbeing initiatives, including Schools of Sanctuary, and This is Us, a regular club for students in the school library.

"Wellbeing on Wednesdays" (WOW) was a key support to student wellbeing that had been developed by the school. Students selected from a menu of themed modules that were linked to the junior cycle wellbeing indicators and supported creative, physical and social learning. Parents who participated in the focus group spoke positively about this initiative, and students reported that it significantly motivated and energised them and had a positive impact on their wellbeing.

Senior management were aware of risk factors for students and had put measures in place to minimise them. For example, a sensory room was developed for students in special classes. Also, the school had established an area where mainstream students experiencing anxiety could access a sensory cubicle and link in with school staff before returning to class. Early interventions were prioritised and planned using Student Data Insights which were generated and shared weekly with all teachers.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective