An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Subject Inspection: Guidance
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Mount Carmel Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	King's Inns Street Dublin 1
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	60853T
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	10/02/2026
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	26/03/2026

What is a subject inspection?

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Guidance under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

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.

Included in this subject inspection report is a student-friendly page that provides information for the children/young people in your school about the inspection that occurred recently. It outlines for them some of the main findings and recommendations.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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.</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/pupils.
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.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	09/02/2026 and 10/02/2026
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussions with principal, deputy principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including a focus group • Meeting with guidance counselling team • Meeting with student support team	• Observation of teaching and learning during three lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Mount Carmel Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Religious Sisters of Charity and has an enrolment of 398 girls. The school provides the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Programmes. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department of Education and Youth's (department's) action plan for educational inclusion.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good overall. Teachers prepared lessons to a very high standard and differentiated learning appropriately.
- All teachers ensured that the DEIS literacy and numeracy targets were very effectively embedded in lessons.
- There was a very high level of guidance provision for students overall. The school deployed the guidance allocation effectively to meet students' needs.
- The school had a comprehensive student care and support structure in place.
- Planning and preparation were very good and there was a detailed departmental plan. However, subject departments needed to engage further with the whole-school guidance planning process.
- The guidance and student support teams collaborated very well with a broad range of community and external services.

Recommendations

- The guidance department, in collaboration with the school's senior management and the board, should put clear and practical supports in place to enable the guidance counsellor to attend group or individual supervision.
- The school should review tutor time provision to ensure that it is purposeful, planned and effective in supporting Wellbeing.
- The whole-school guidance team should extend its remit to include staff and student representatives.
- Subject departments should complete whole-school guidance department planning templates as part of the whole-school guidance process, as outlined in the department's Information Note 001/2024.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good. In all lessons, teachers demonstrated very good subject-specific knowledge. Teachers had prepared well-designed lesson tasks and shared clear learning intentions and relevant success criteria with students.
- There was a good balance between teacher and student inputs. Students engaged very well in collaborative activities, such as, think-pair-share. In some lessons, complex concepts were discussed but there was a need for time to be given for reflection. When planning lessons, teachers should include pauses to help students recall and consolidate their learning.
- In all lessons, teachers had adapted resources and materials to provide learners with appropriate support and sufficient challenge. It was evident from students' written work and oral contributions that this differentiated approach was highly effective.
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills was included as part of lesson planning. In one lesson, numeracy skills were very effectively embedded in an activity where students completed a skills and quality audit and plotted the results on a graph. In another lesson, students examined the weekly take-home pay for a chosen career, helping them link numeracy to real-life examples. Word mirroring, segmenting and encoding strategies were used very effectively in another lesson to promote literacy.
- Teacher questioning as a means of assessment was generally very effective. In all lessons, the teacher circulated around the room, providing ongoing verbal questioning, support and observation. High quality formative assessment, including feedback on completed tasks and research projects was evident in students' folders.
- The guidance counsellor maintained good systems for storing and accessing student workbooks. The specific programme followed by students was augmented by well-prepared classroom materials. Students had limited access to digital devices. There was scope for the school to build and expand upon the use of digital technology and devices to further enhance teaching and learning.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- There was a very good level of subject provision and whole-school support for Guidance. The school deployed the guidance allocation effectively to meet students' needs. The work of the guidance department was supplemented by a part-time external counsellor who provided additional support for students.
- The guidance counsellor had completed a broad range of teacher professional learning and participated in a supervision group, though attending sessions was sometimes difficult due to practical challenges.The guidance department, in collaboration with senior management and the board, should put clear and practical supports in place to enable the guidance counsellor to attend group or individual supervision.
- The school had a specialist guidance room, which provided space for small group and one-to-one guidance counselling. In first year and second year, students received guidance-related learning through a timetabled wellbeing class once a week. In third year, students received guidance-related instruction on subject choice and study skills at key junctures throughout the year.
- Transition Year (TY) students received a guidance module once a week. A timetabled weekly guidance class was provided in both fifth and sixth years. LCA students also received a timetabled guidance class once a week. This very good level of guidance provision facilitated valuable classroom contact time with the guidance counsellor.
- Students were allocated only eight minutes with their tutors each morning before break time. This period was too short to allow for meaningful engagement with Wellbeing. The school should review tutor time provision to ensure it is purposeful, planned and effective in supporting students' wellbeing. Students in the focus group felt that this was an important area in need of review.

- The student-support team comprised the principal, deputy principal, guidance counsellor, additional educational needs (AEN) coordinator, home-school-community-liaison coordinator (HSCL), *City Connects* coordinator and the English as an additional language (EAL) coordinator. Meetings were scheduled twice a week, one focused on overall key issues and the other was dedicated to student support. This arrangement allowed for a very effective level of collaboration. Clear agendas were set and detailed and actionable minutes were kept and shared securely on the online platform. All correct procedures were adhered to in relation to confidentiality and record keeping. Feedback was given to staff using 'lean-in', 'lean-out' and 'traffic light' systems, clearly signposting how best to support students. The guidance team and student support team collaborated very effectively with a broad range of community and external services.
- The school had access to the School Completion Programme (SCP) for only two days per week. Additional access to SCP, where possible, would be beneficial given the level of students' needs. There was a range of staff and student wellbeing initiatives in the school including the student council, teacher mentoring, and various themed wellbeing weeks. Students in the focus group referenced specifically the support and safe place that they experienced within the school community.
- A series of parents' information evenings and coffee mornings were organised by the HSCL and guidance department to support student transitions, subject choice and decision making about progression. Links with past pupils were encouraged and fostered and the guidance department also facilitated the Trinity Access Programme (TAP) and the Technological University Dublin (TUD) access programme.
- Students in first year chose their subjects following a month-long taster programme, with support from the guidance department and deputy principal. Subject and programme choice was well supported in both third year and TY through information sessions, student sessions with fifth year subject ambassadors, and taster days for those interested in the LCA programme. Students referred to the value of peer-to-peer learning, particularly in helping with subject choice and the transition from primary school.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of planning and preparation was very good. The school's online platform was used effectively to collate planning and share resources.
- The guidance department had prepared relevant schemes of work for each year group. The schemes of work included planning for additional educational needs (AEN), differentiation, various methodologies and assessment approaches. There was some overlap in planning with the TY and fifth year scheme. The guidance department should review TY guidance provision and planning to ensure the most effective use of time and resources.
- The overall whole-school guidance plan was of a very high quality and a very effective level of self-reflection was evident. In keeping with effective practice, mental health programmes were also included in overall planning.
- The guidance department tracked student progression regularly and consistently, particularly in relation to key transitions and in line with DEIS targets. This information was shared with staff in line with best practice.
- The guidance department planned very effectively for college and university open days and fostered links with higher education, further education, and university-access programmes. These additional programmes provided support clinics for students and parents. Students in the focus group made reference to how much they enjoyed the co-curricular activities offered as part of the programmes.
- The school had a whole-school guidance team comprising members of the student support team. The whole-school guidance plan was reviewed throughout the school year, as necessary. The whole-school guidance team should now extend its remit to include staff and student representatives to ensure that they have an input into planning.
- Subject departments needed to engage further with the whole-school guidance planning process. To progress this work, subject departments should complete whole-school

guidance department planning templates as part of whole-school guidance process, as outlined in the department's Information Note 001/2024.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and guidance counsellor at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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Department of Education and Youth

For the students of Mount Carmel Secondary School about their learning in Guidance

Date of inspection: 10/02/2026

What kind of inspection did your school have?

A subject inspection was completed in your school. The inspector observed lessons and spoke with the principal and teachers. The inspector met with a group of students to talk to them about their learning in Guidance.

What were the main findings of the inspection?

- The school had very good supports in place to care for students.
- There were lots of opportunities for students to attend various college and career events.
- Guidance was provided at both junior and senior cycles.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in Guidance?

- The school should review the timetabled tutor time to make sure it is more effective in supporting Wellbeing.
- The whole-school guidance team should include staff and student representatives.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
Special thanks to the students who participated in the focus group.

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