



Subject Inspection: Home Economics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name Our Lady Of Mercy College

Seoladh na scoile/School address Beaumont
Dublin 9

Uimhir rolla/Roll number 60870T

Dáta na cigireachta/
Date of evaluation 14/11/2025

Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/
Date of issue of report 15/01/2026

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 Home Economics 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.

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

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:

<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Bí Cineálta</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">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

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

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	11/11/2025 and 14/11/2025
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review of relevant documentsDiscussion with principal and key staffInteraction with students, including focus groups <ul style="list-style-type: none">Observation of teaching and learning during four lessonsExamination of students' workFeedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Our Lady of Mercy College is a voluntary secondary school operating under the patronage of CEIST-Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust. Student enrolment was 411 girls. The school provided the full range of curriculum programmes and participated in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for educational inclusion.

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.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning observed in lessons was good overall, with some very good practice. Aspects of practice to facilitate deeper learning and assessment required further development.
- The high quality of teacher-student interactions was a significant strength observed in lessons. Students were affirmed and encouraged to do their best.
- Students highly valued the opportunities provided for them to develop their practical skills in food studies, textiles and craft.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Home Economics was good, with some very effective practice evident.
- The quality of teachers' collaborative planning for Home Economics was very good overall. Teachers shared a vision, which supported students to be creative and to live healthy and sustainable lives.
- A significant strength was that the home economics team identified specific learning opportunities that supported the achievement of DEIS targets in the areas of attendance, partnerships, literacy and numeracy.

Recommendations

- Teachers should develop lesson starter activities that assess students' prior knowledge and understanding of content, and enable them to link lesson concepts to experiences outside the classroom.
- Teachers, when planning lessons, should give further consideration to the pace and sequencing of activities, including task design, to ensure that lessons are sufficiently multi-modal and facilitate students to articulate and reflect on their learning actively.
- School management, in collaboration with the home economics team, should formalise procedures for an annual stock-take to facilitate the phased upgrading of equipment, and the health and safety checklists should be developed into risk assessments, which proactively take cognisance of the full range of activities in each specialist room.
- Attainment trends should be analysed further by the home economics team to identify the next set of teaching and learning priorities to support the achievement of the DEIS student attainment targets.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The quality of teaching and learning observed in lessons was good overall, with some very good practice. Some aspects of pedagogic practice required further development to facilitate deeper learning and assessment of progress.
- In all lessons observed, the quality of teacher-student interactions was a significant strength. All interactions were respectful, affirming and encouraging. Students in their focus-group meeting appreciated the high level of teacher support provided for them in supporting their learning and in encouraging them to be creative and to live healthy and sustainably.
- Formative assessment practice at the start of lessons required improvement. Most lessons began by the teacher telling students what was completed in previous lessons. Opportunities were missed to assess students' prior understanding of concepts meaningfully. Teachers should develop lesson-starter activities, which assess students' prior knowledge and enable them to link lesson content to experiences outside the classroom.
- Learning intentions were shared in all lessons. Students' readiness for learning was very effectively facilitated when the intentions were phrased simply and discussed with learners. Sufficient time should be given to assess students' depth of learning and achievement in each of the selected intentions.
- Teachers made some good use of well-designed visual stimuli, including digital clips, to support students' understanding of new content. However, at times explanations of new content was fast paced, too teacher-led and overly reliant on text-based resources. This approach impacted on students' depth of understanding. Students' learning would have been enhanced by providing additional time to interact with and discuss the visual stimuli and digital clips prepared for lessons to deepen their understanding.
- In all lessons observed, students had opportunities to work on group tasks. Further consideration should be given to the task design to ensure that students can build on prior learning and to facilitate optimal engagement of all students. Good quality learning was observed in instances where students had sufficient time and an appropriate level of knowledge to complete the task to a high standard. Teachers should provide sufficient plenary time on completion of a task to allow students to discuss, report on and critically reflect on their learning and facilitate an assessment of their progress.
- To build on the good practice already evident, teachers, when planning lessons, should give careful consideration to the pace and sequencing of activities, including task design, to ensure that lessons are multi-modal and support highly effective incremental and experiential learning, and facilitate students to grow as articulate and reflective learners.
- Students reported that the digital class sites developed by teachers supported their continuity of learning between lessons. Given that students had access to digital presentations on these class sites, they should be supported further in developing their note-making skills, as an alternative to transcribing written text during lessons.
- Some very good routines were apparent in student copybooks, scrap books and folders. Students regularly reflected on and evaluated their progress in practical coursework and the manner in which the design brief process was integrated into practical lessons was a significant strength of students' learning.
- A review of written tasks assigned to students indicated a predominance of lower-order activities, such as recall of facts. To support the development of students' higher-order critical thinking skills, the range of written tasks assigned should be extended to develop student competencies in researching, analysing and interpreting data in both text and numerical format.
- Students in their focus group commented very favourably on how teachers used the school's digital platform to provide formative feedback. While student work was monitored regularly, there was scope to build on the approaches to the delivery of formative feedback, including strategies for how students use feedback to develop their

work. In instances where homework is corrected in class, students should take note of the corrections and advice provided.

- Summative assessment arrangements included differentiated examinations and the provision of aggregated assessment marks. It would be worthwhile for the team to review the pitch of questions used in the in-house assessments, as some of the questions assessed basic recall and understanding of facts only.
- Students recognised that Home Economics supported them to live healthy and sustainable lives. They highly valued the wide range of opportunities provided for them to develop their practical skills in food studies, textiles and craft.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Home Economics was good, with some very effective practice apparent.
- Home Economics was a very popular optional subject. The provision of LCA Hotel Catering and Tourism provided opportunities for students opting for the LCA programme to build on their learning from Junior Cycle Home Economics.
- TY Home Economics was timetabled for one class per week for the full academic year. This arrangement presented difficulties in facilitating high quality continuity in teaching and learning. Consideration could be given to providing two weekly classes for a shorter duration.
- Management and staff made deliberate efforts to facilitate smooth transitions for students new to the school. A particular strength were the opportunities provided for primary school pupils to visit live lessons to meet teachers, talk to students and experience first-hand the nature of learning in Home Economics. The highly commendable range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities provided in Home Economics also promoted the subject as an attractive option for all students.
- While timetabled allocation met the minimum tuition time for all specifications, aspects of this provision required development to enhance the spread of lessons across the teaching week and support optimal learner outcomes.
- The sixty-minute lesson length was not sufficient to complete the necessary range of practical and procedural skills within practical food studies lessons. Students in the focus group spoke about the challenges of being rushed to complete tasks and sometimes dishes were completed over a number of classes, which narrowed the range of skills that could be developed in practical food studies. Senior management and the home economics team should review the timetable arrangements with a view to supporting improved learner experiences and outcomes in practical lessons.
- The school had overcome a period of staff turnover, which impacted on continuity of teaching and learning. At the time of the evaluation, the home economics team comprised two very committed and enthusiastic subject specialists. The teachers had actively engaged in a wide range of professional learning opportunities, which had impacted very positively on planning for teaching and learning. The home economics teachers shared a vision for learning, which developed students' creativity and enabled them to be informed and responsible decision-makers.
- Specialist rooms were designed as vibrant learning environments. Visual labels on presses supported students to become familiar with key pieces of equipment, while displays of student work promoted creativity and high expectations for achievement.
- The range of resources available was good and school management was supportive of upgrading facilities. However, some specialist equipment and fixed fittings required updating and replacement. School management, in collaboration with the home economics team, should formalise procedures for an annual stock-take to itemise equipment for repair or renewal. This will facilitate a systematic approach to the phased upgrading of specialist equipment.
- The health and safety policy for Home Economics comprised a series of checklists, which required development. The home economics team, in collaboration with school management should develop risk assessments for Home Economics, which take full cognisance of the full range of activities in each specialist room.

3. Planning and preparation

- The quality of teachers' collaborative planning for Home Economics was very good overall.
- There was a clear connection between subject-department planning and the school's DEIS plan. A very significant strength was the quality of the learning opportunities identified in Home Economics to optimise attendance and develop partnerships with parents and the community.
- Strategies to support DEIS targets in literacy, numeracy and attainment required refinement. The selected strategies were not embedded in the teaching and assessment practice of the lessons visited. Teachers should review the success of implementation of the agreed strategies to refine specific approaches that will enhance areas identified.
- While the home economics team reviewed student outcomes in the certificate examinations, there was scope to develop this practice. The team should analyse attainment trends over a three-year period, and include information from in-house assessments to identify what is working well and the areas for development. The outcomes of this analysis, together with information from curriculum publications, should be used to develop the next set of teaching and learning priorities, which complement the DEIS attainment targets.
- The TY micro-module was exceptionally well developed with an assessment framework underpinned by well-designed features of quality. The Junior Cycle plans were developed to identify key learning and specific resources. Teachers had developed a range of well-designed student resource booklets, which supported learning.
- commendably, programme plans were live working documents. At the next review stage, the sequence of key learning in lessons should be reviewed to enhance an incremental and integrated approach to students' learning.

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



For the students of Our Lady Of Mercy College about their learning in Home Economics

Date of inspection: 14/11/2025

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 Home Economics.

What were the main findings of the inspection?



- Teaching and learning were of good quality in the lessons observed, with some very good practice.
- Students and teachers worked very well together.
- Students enjoyed the opportunities to develop practical skills in food studies and be creative in textiles and craft.

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



- Lessons should begin with activities that allow students to show what they already know about the topic and make links between the lesson content and life outside school.
- Teachers should make further use of visual materials and group work to support learning and reduce the need for students to transcribe notes or read from text during lessons.

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