

School Context

School of the Holy Spirit is a special school for students aged 4-18 years. It caters mostly for students who have a diagnosis of ASD and/or Emotional Behavioural Difficulties who have an IQ of Borderline Average or above. Students are accepted into the school on the basis of a psychological report, a recommendation which fulfils the school's criteria for enrolment, and when there is a place available for them at their age level.

There are currently 84 students on the roll. There are 56 staff, including 17 full time teachers and 1 part-time teacher (Principal and Deputy Principal administering), 31 SNAs and 3 ancillary staff (caretaker and 2 secretaries). In autumn 2024 the ETB has allocated an English teacher for 22 hours a week and a Home Economics teacher for 8 hours a week. The school is also the Base School for the Kilkenny City Supply Panel of 4 teachers.

Each class has 6 students, a teacher and 2/3 SNAs. There are 7 primary classrooms. Classes 1 -7 follow the National Curriculum, differentiated to meet individual students' needs (except for Irish).

There are 7 secondary classes working on PLU, JCSP and LCA programmes. Year 1 is a transition programme at the end of which students are assessed using WRAT 4 to determine whether they will follow Level 2 or Level 3 curriculum, or both. For their final two years in the school, students engage with the LCA course and may sit exams in English, Maths, Woodwork and History. Running in parallel to this they work on the School Leavers Programme to prepare them for their next educational or occupational setting on leaving the school. Community links are established and fostered to maximise educational potential and to create opportunities for future placements, study and/or jobs. Students who leave at 18 years of age typically attend Ormond College, National Learning Network, Beam, SOS, Southeast Technological University and other 3rd level settings.

In general, every opportunity is taken by teachers to engage in initiatives and projects which will support students' learning and enhance their lives in the areas of music, art, drama, physical and mental wellbeing and general life skills. To this end, outside facilitators may attend the school or students may access programmes off campus.

Professionals are facilitated to attend the school to work with individual groups of students or to support teachers in their work. Teachers are eager to work with such professionals to support students through assessments and the delivery of specific programmes e.g. OT, SLT.

All students have an SSP (Specific Support Plan) which is written by the class teacher in November of each year in collaboration with students, parents, other professionals and colleagues. It is reviewed and updated in May of the following year.