

Yellow Flag Programme Review

Report and Feedback



The
Yellow Flag
Programme

School	Holywell Educate Together National School Swords
Date of Review	Friday 13th Jun 20, 2025
Reviewed By	Karen Shiels, Yellow Flag Development Worker

Overall Comments and Feedback on the Visit

Provide a brief overview of your feedback from the visit

The visit to Holywell Educate Together National School was a warm and welcoming experience, with link teacher Erica Hogan providing excellent guidance and support, alongside teachers Eileen Gamble and Josh Jacob, and Principal Maria Boyne.

The school environment is vibrant and inclusive, with colourful posters, welcoming displays, and a clear emphasis on valuing cultural and ethnic diversity. Flags representing the countries connected to the student body are proudly displayed, along with greetings in students' home languages and a world map marked with pins to reflect the diverse backgrounds of the school community. These visual elements speak to a strong, school-wide commitment to recognising and celebrating the unique identities of all students.

It is evident that the ethos of inclusion extends beyond displays. Posters throughout the school highlight the shared responsibilities of students, staff, and parents in fostering an inclusive environment. During the visit, the school choir performed *This Pretty Planet*, a thoughtful and poignant song that reflects the school's appreciation for beauty, diversity, and interconnectedness.

The Yellow Flag notice board is prominently placed at the school entrance, underscoring the importance of the programme within the school community. In addition, books that promote diversity and inclusion are regularly featured, further embedding the values of the Yellow Flag Programme into everyday school life.

Particular Initiatives or Actions that Stood Out

Were there any particular initiatives or actions that particularly stood out? Detail them here with a brief description: Yes

One particularly impactful initiative was the Multicultural Day held on May 5th, which stood out as a powerful example of community engagement and cultural celebration. The event took place on a Bank Holiday in the local community centre, enabling full participation from families and the wider community.

A Polish and Brazilian band added a vibrant and festive atmosphere to the day, which featured traditional dishes prepared by families and shared with pride. Many attendees wore traditional clothing, further enriching the celebration of cultural identity and heritage.

The students we spoke with described the day as both memorable and meaningful. They expressed pride in being able to share their cultural traditions with peers and felt that the experience positively contributed to a greater sense of inclusion and belonging within the school community.

Promote, Value and Celebrate Ethnic and Cultural Diversity during the year

Has the school promoted, valued and celebrated ethnic and cultural diversity? If yes, detail in which ways

Overview of events and initiatives in the school and the involvement of the Diversity Committee in organising them, and local community engagement: Yes

It is clear that Holywell Educate Together National School actively promotes, values, and celebrates ethnic and cultural diversity throughout the school year. This commitment is visible across various aspects of school life, including vibrant art displays, positive affirmation posters, and notice boards that showcase home languages and student-led projects linked to their countries of origin.

One notable initiative was a language survey conducted within the school, which led to engaging projects focused on students' home languages. These activities allowed students to learn from one another and fostered an environment of mutual respect and inclusion. The display of everyday words in multiple languages was a particularly meaningful way to value and highlight the linguistic diversity of the school community. A strong emphasis on kindness was woven throughout all events and initiatives.

A key highlight of the year was the school's Intercultural Day, held on a Bank Holiday Monday to encourage broader community participation. Hosted in the local community centre, the event was well attended and included Polish and Brazilian music, as well as traditional dress and dance and traditional food from. This event demonstrated the strong collaboration between the school, the Diversity Committee, and the wider community in celebrating the rich cultural backgrounds of the students and families.

A Visible and Proactive Stand Against Racism

Understanding Racism and how to recognise it in school life: Yes

The school has engaged meaningfully in developing understanding around racism and how it can present in school life.

Policy development and implementation: Yes

Holywell Educate Together National School has developed a robust Anti Racism Policy, it combined with the new BÍ Cinealtas procedures ensure that all students are aware of racism and identity based bullying and know what to do if they witness or experience racism or bullying in any form. The DC students were involved in the creation of the policy and created an infographic that will be displayed in all classrooms. They believe this will be easier for younger students to understand and it will also be useful for parents who do not have English as a first language.

Proactive efforts to communicate the policy to the staff and school community: Yes

The Policy was shared at various stages of its development and staff and parents were afforded time to comment on it and is available to all personnel and the wider school community. The infographic has been shared on the school website and the policy once ratified will also be shared on the website. Hard copies are available if requested. The policy will be reviewed annually or as needed, based on feedback, incident reports, and evolving best practices.

Students from Minority Ethnic Communities Feel Included and Integral to School Life

Student voice central to, and amplified in, the Diversity Committee, with teacher in supporting role: Yes

It is evident that the student voice is very important at Holywell Educate Together National School. The Diversity Committee is diverse and active, meeting regularly. There were efforts to widen the participation with Ken the lollipopman and a member of the board of management was involved. The student voice is central to the diversity committee and the students involved believed that they have seen a positive impact in the school committee since renewing their YF.

The identities of the school population, including students from diverse backgrounds are displayed and seen within the school. Efforts are made to amplify and include diverse voices: Yes

The diversity committee is reflective of the school community and the students are very aware of the principles and ethos of the YFP and how they reflect the ethos and principles of the school. There is Traveller and Roma representation on the committee as well as Irish and a diverse mix of BME students. The students are articulate and all have had a positive experience on the diversity committee.

Teachers Embed Intercultural Education within the Curriculum and Classroom Work

Significant efforts are made to ensure students experience an education that "respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society:

Holywell Educate Together National School makes significant and commendable efforts to ensure that students experience an education which respects and reflects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages, and traditions present in Irish society today.

This commitment is most clearly reflected in the delivery of the Learn Together Ethical Education curriculum, which is central to school life. This curriculum actively promotes themes of equality, justice, human rights, belief systems, and ethical decision-making, creating space for students to explore and appreciate different worldviews in a respectful and inclusive manner. Through this approach, students are encouraged to develop empathy, critical thinking, and a strong sense of social responsibility.

Teachers at Holywell consistently integrate intercultural education across subject areas and classroom activities. For example, lessons include opportunities to explore global cultures, celebrate home languages, and examine issues such as discrimination, racism, and inequality through age-appropriate and engaging resources. Cultural and linguistic diversity is presented not only as something to be respected, but as something to be celebrated and learned from.

The school's ethos and principles are clearly aligned with those of the Yellow Flag Programme. Inclusion, respect for diversity, and active citizenship are not only taught explicitly, but also embedded in the daily practices of the school community. This whole-school approach ensures that intercultural education is not a standalone activity, but a continuous and integrated part of the students' learning journey.

Recommendations and Suggestions

Yellow Flag would like to acknowledge and commend the incredible hard work, dedication of everyone, all the students, parents, school staff, principal and deputy principal. A special acknowledgement to the wonderful support you have in your link Erica Hogan, on her commitment and continued hard work building a whole school culture that is welcoming and inclusive.

Your ongoing commitment to the long-term work of inclusive education in your school is inspiring. It was powerful to observe and listen to how meaningful the programme has been for the youth members on the Diversity Committee. It was wonderful to hear the examples of how you are embedding the celebration of culture and diversity in all aspects of school life and are being actively anti-racist through

the creation of your anti-racism policy. It gives us great pleasure to renew your Yellow Flag status.


We would suggest there are a number of areas that you could focus on as you continue to embed the principals and values of the Yellow Flag Programme in your school.

- Continue to embed intercultural education across all curriculum areas.
- Involve guest speakers and role models from diverse backgrounds. Inviting speakers from Traveller, Roma, migrant and refugee communities as well as minority ethnic leaders, artists and authors can offer students meaningful, lived insights into cultural identity, resilience and leadership. These visits enrich classroom discussions and help students see themselves reflected in a broad range of positive roles.
- Sustain and expand community engagement. The school's Intercultural Day stands out as a model of community connection. Future events build on this by collaborating with local intercultural centres, migrant support groups or minority organisations.

For the next 3 years, you can fly the flag high with pride. Well done on creating such a positive, welcoming space for all your students. A place where they can feel pride in who they are and a connection to learning and education at Holywell Educate Together National School. Feel proud that you are part of a movement of change in education in Ireland today and are making a powerful contribution to future young people coming through the doors of your school.

As you may already be aware we have criteria in place for how Yellow Flag schools hold onto their flags. We call this 'renewing the Yellow Flag'. [Here](#) you will find further information on the renewal programme. You will note the criteria sets out that Yellow Flag schools can only hold onto their Yellow Flag for three years. They must then fulfil the criteria outlined to have their flags renewed.

May you always strive to be a voice for all ethnic minorities, young people and their families in Ireland. We look forward to welcoming you at the awards in Spring 2026.

Yellow Flag Status 8 Steps Achieved?	
Yes, all conditions met, evidence of all 8 actions achieved and impact delivered	
Yes, subject to a number of conditions/actions yet to be demonstrated <u>Further details:</u>	
No, did not demonstrate enough evidence of achievement of steps or impact <u>Further details:</u>	