



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Programme Evaluation in TY Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Newpark Comprehensive School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Newtownpark Avenue Blackrock Co Dublin
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	810011
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	13/12/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	11/02/2025

What is a programme evaluation?

The programme evaluation model of inspection is used to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the following programmes and to provide advice and support to teachers, principals and school management in post-primary schools and centres for education:

- Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP)
- Transition Year (TY) programme
- Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

How to read this report

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

1. Teaching and learning
2. Programme provision and whole-school support
3. Programme planning, co-ordination and evaluation

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.

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

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>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils/students.

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

Programme evaluation in TY

Dates of inspection	12/12/2024 and 13/12/2024
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and deputy principals• Meeting with programme coordinator• Meetings with key staff• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student focus-group interview• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to senior management team and programme coordinator.

School context

Newpark Comprehensive School is a co-educational post-primary school under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin. At the time of the evaluation, there was an enrolment of 849 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle (JC), a compulsory Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good, with instances of highly effective practice observed in lessons.
- The sample selection of student e-portfolios reviewed during the evaluation were of a high standard overall; it was positive that the approach to e-portfolio work had been developed and updated following an evaluation and feedback from students.
- Overall, students displayed high levels of engagement in the lessons observed and embraced opportunities to be creative while involved in active-learning tasks.
- Programme provision and whole school support for TY was very good overall; the timetable was in need of review to maximise the learning experience for all students and ensure they have the opportunity to engage with a broad curriculum.
- Programme planning, evaluation, coordination and review were very good; senior management in collaboration with the programme coordinator were highly effective in managing the programme, and there were high levels of engagement with evaluation and reflection for improvement.
- Subject plans varied in quality, ranging from requiring improvement to very good.

Recommendations

- Teachers should further collaborate to promote highly effective teaching and learning practices; the provision of greater support and challenge for some, effective production of written work, and clear instructions during collaborative and active-learning tasks are key areas for development.
- The senior management team should review the current timetable with a view to providing more subject and module choices for students; this work should be informed by the guidance in the Department of Educations' new Transition Year Programme Statement.
- All teachers of TY should ensure that subject plans fully adhere to the TY Guidelines; the practice of dividing Mathematics and Irish classes into higher and ordinary levels should be reviewed.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching and learning

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good, with instances of highly effective practice observed in lessons.
- Overall, students displayed high levels of engagement in the lessons observed and embraced opportunities to be creative and participate in active learning tasks. In all lessons, students were encouraged to use, and develop, key skills such as collaboration, reflection and social skills. Although all lessons included a collaborative element, it is recommended that all teachers incorporate clear instructions prior to and during tasks to further promote positive dispositions for learning. In addition, the assignment of roles would further support effective collaborative learning.
- There was a good balance between teacher instruction and student input, students were confident in their learning and were willing to share their knowledge and views with their peers. This was a very positive aspect of lessons, which enriched the learning experience for all.
- In all lessons, teachers treated material differently from the corresponding LC topics and there was a clear distinction between the programmes. In the most effective lessons, rich and interesting resources were used to increase motivation and enjoyment levels. This very good practice should be further embedded in practice across TY.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers effectively shared learning intentions along with the success criteria. In some instances, teachers referred back to learning intentions to identify progression and gaps in learning. Teachers should further collaborate to share best practice in this area and ensure a consistent approach across the school.
- Assessment practices were good overall. In the most effective lessons, high-quality teacher questioning and observation of students' work allowed teachers to formatively assess students and provided teachers with feedback on student understanding. Teachers should further develop their formative assessment practices to extend the ways they assess the learning and identify gaps in student understanding during lessons.
- Overall, students displayed good levels of independent learning skills in lessons, however, students could take greater ownership of the production of their written work. Teachers should encourage students to develop their note-making skills.
- The sample of student e-portfolios reviewed during the evaluation were of a high standard, it was positive that the approach had been developed and updated following an evaluation and feedback from students. It was evident that students' reflection skills and creativity developed as they progressively built their e-portfolios and they were encouraged to update their e-portfolio weekly during a dedicated time and supported by their tutors.
- There were some missed opportunities in lessons to make links across the programme. A greater focus should be placed on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning across the programme, in keeping with the aims of TY.
- In the student focus group, students spoke positively about their experience of TY. Students valued opportunities to grow, develop, and enhance their social skills while contributing to the local community. They praised their teachers for their passion and dedication to their subjects, and the further opportunities given to work independently and creatively in TY. Students expressed the need to spread out their assignments and to be given greater notification and clear timelines to complete work so that they are not overloaded with work at certain times of the year. This should be addressed.
- Although there were examples of the effective use of digital technology (DT) to enhance learning in lessons, students should be given further opportunities to engage with DT in the classroom.
- In keeping with the school's agreed approach to effective differentiation in the classroom, teachers should collaborate to further plan and develop differentiated

teaching and learning approaches to support student needs and ensure that all are suitably challenged,

2. Programme provision and whole school support

- The overall quality of whole school support for the programme was very good.
- The senior management team should review the current timetable with a view to providing more subject and module choices for students. Consideration should be given to extending short course provision, while including more tasting options for students. This work should be informed by the guidance in the new Transition Year Programme Statement.
- Work experience was facilitated in three separate weeks over the duration of the programme. The programme also included other activity weeks such as *in Dublin Week* and *Arts Week*. Students spoke very positively about their experiences during activity weeks.
- Guest speakers were timetabled for one period per week. It was recommended that this approach be regularly reviewed and management should ensure that the school is adhering to the DE guidelines for guest speakers.
- While it was positive that community engagement was encouraged and promoted, as it was timetabled for two hours per week for the duration of the school year, not all students could attend their community action of choice during school time. This approach to community engagement should be reviewed to maximise participation and ensure all students are receiving a minimum of 28 hours instruction per week.
- Students engaged in a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. These activities included school trips, Gaisce, mini-company and Poetry Aloud. Interview day was reported as being a highlight of the programme and students expressed their appreciation for this valuable experience.
- Senior management placed a high value on the TY programme. The school had invested appropriate resources and expertise to support the successful delivery of the TY programme and recently availed of relevant continuing professional development to bring about improvement. This is commendable.
- Assessment in TY comprised of projects, assignments, class tests, and their TY e-portfolio. A credit system for tutors and teachers to use in the assessment and reporting was based on grading students' attendance, punctuality and commitment. A sample of reports reviewed during the evaluation demonstrated effective feedback to students, highlighting key strengths and areas for improvement.
- Mathematics and Irish were grouped according to higher and ordinary levels. In the interest of providing a more varied and dynamic learning experience for students, and optimising the opportunities for students to progress, mixed-ability groups should be considered.
- Teachers were encouraged to create modules in areas of personal expertise and interest. This had led to an increased sense of ownership by staff and a wide range of interesting learning opportunities for students, for example First Aid and Philosophy.

3. Programme planning, co-ordination and review

- Programme planning, evaluation, coordination and review were very good. Senior management, along with the programme coordinator were highly effective in managing the programme.
- The TY core team was provided with sufficient time to meet and plan the running of the programme. They displayed high levels of motivation, interest and passion for the TY programme and were committed to ongoing reflection and improvement.
- Programme coordination, including the planning and implementation of the overall programme design was very good. More time should be allocated at staff meetings to discuss effective teaching and learning approaches in TY. The coordinator should

periodically engage all teachers who teach the programme in discussions to reflect on collective approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

- Subject plans were of a good standard overall, they ranged in quality from requiring improvement to very good. Teachers of TY subjects, modules and courses should ensure they develop plans that fully meet the requirements of the TY Guidelines.
- There was very good communication between the TY core team and the wider school community. A school newsletter was created and shared and TY updates featured heavily in this. The school's digital platform was used to very good effect to communicate with staff and students on TY related matters.
- There was effective collaboration between TY teachers and the special educational needs (SEN) department. Teachers accessed information about students either directly from the core SEN team or from the school's digital platform and a booster class was provided to TY students requiring support to effectively engage with the programme.

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

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