



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Subject Inspection: Physical Education REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name Newbridge College

Seoladh na scoile/School address Newbridge
Co. Kildare

Uimhir rolla/Roll number 61680T

Dáta na cigireachta/
Date of evaluation 09/09/2025

Dáta eisiúna na
tuairisce/Date of issue
of report 07/11/2025

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(s) evaluated learning and teaching in Physical Education 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

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>
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. <i>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.</i> 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.	1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of <i>Bí Cineálta</i>, <i>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.</i> 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 <i>Bí Cineálta</i>.

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

Subject inspection

Dates of inspection	08/09/2025 and 09/09/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including focus groups	• Observation of teaching and learning during 7 lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Newbridge College is a co-educational fee-paying voluntary post primary school committed to providing a Catholic education in the Dominican tradition for all its students. There were 927 students enrolled at the time of the inspection. The school offers the Junior Cycle, a Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- Good teaching, learning and assessment was observed in the majority of lessons. Of those lessons, some elements of very good practice were also noted.
- The introduction of Leaving Certificate Physical Education (LCPE) as an optional subject for the Leaving Certificate Established (LCE) in 2020 has been very positively received by the school community.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation was good.
- Overall, whole school support and subject provision for PE was good with the exception of provision at senior cycle which required significant improvement.
- There was an excellent range of extra-curricular physical activities provided to students to complement the PE provision.

Recommendations

- In fifth- and sixth-year, students were not timetabled for Senior Cycle Physical Education (SCPE). As all senior cycle students should experience eighty minutes of timetabled SCPE each week for the full school year, this matter should be resolved as a matter of priority.
- While students were taught PE by suitably qualified teachers in the majority of lessons, this was not the case in a minority of lessons. This should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- In each practical lesson observed, students had to change into and out of their sports gear at the beginning and end of lessons, reducing tuition time. To ensure that the timetabled time for PE is maximised, a review of current changing arrangements should be undertaken and should include the perspectives of teachers, students and parents.
- The PE department should oversee the creation and retention of student profiles for use in fitness testing to facilitate effective recording, reflection on and setting of individual and developmentally appropriate, measurable and time-bound goals.
- Further work to enhance LCPE subject planning is required in order that plans reflect the specific context of the school and its students, and to lessen the extent to which the textbook guides practice.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- Good teaching, learning and assessment was observed in the majority of lessons. Of those lessons, some elements of very good practice were also noted.
- In all lessons visited, interactions among students and between students and their teachers were affirming and mutually respectful. PE teachers had excellent subject knowledge and their passion and enthusiasm for their subject area helped to motivate students.
- Learning intentions were appropriately shared at the start of all lessons. In a small number of highly effective lessons, learning intentions were well phrased, using student-friendly language and framed what learners should know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. Learning intentions were linked to prior learning and were revisited at the end of the lesson to consolidate student learning.
- In one LCPE lesson observed, a well-structured group activity required students to collaboratively research and share with their peers the protocols for health-related fitness testing in preparation for an upcoming practical lesson. This highly effective practice supported students to take greater ownership and responsibility for their own learning.
- The LCPE teachers effectively utilised the school's online learning platform for sharing lesson resources and reviewing students' work. A sample review of students' devices showed that teachers oversaw students' LCPE project work online, offering constructive feedback and clear directions for improvement. Students mentioned that this online platform significantly supported their learning and study.
- In three junior cycle badminton lessons observed, teachers created opportunities for students to develop their practical skills in collaboration with peers. Students generally engaged well in these activities. However, the structure of some practical tasks did not enable students to fully achieve the shared learning intentions of the lesson. Teachers should ensure a clear alignment between the learning outcomes and the learning intentions of each lesson.
- The potential benefits of a short throw projector to support teaching and learning in the PE hall were not evident. Together with management, teachers should review how the school's current digital resources can be deployed more effectively to further enhance student engagement and motivation. Additional whiteboards for the PE hall are also encouraged.
- Students who engaged in a focus group meeting spoke positively of their overall experiences in PE with TY students detailing their optional, swimming course as a recent highlight. All students observed that invasion and net games were the primary activities offered and that they had limited or no instruction in adventure activities, dance, athletics or gymnastics. The subject department should review the current range of activities offered to students and should plan for the delivery of as broad a range of experiences as possible.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- Overall, whole school support and subject provision for PE was good with the exception of provision at senior cycle which required significant improvement.
- Qualified personnel, with appropriate qualifications, taught the majority of lessons. A significant minority of lessons were taught by staff without the appropriate qualifications, as recognised by the Teaching Council. This should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- All students had access to the minimum 135 hours of Junior Cycle Physical Education (JCPE) lessons over the three years of junior cycle as outlined in Circular 0028/2023.
- In TY, students had eighty minutes of timetabled SCPE per week. However, in fifth- and sixth-year students were not timetabled for SCPE. All senior cycle students should

experience eighty minutes of timetabled PE each week for the full school year as outlined in Circular 0054/2023. This shortfall should be addressed as a matter of priority.

- The school introduced LCPE as an optional subject for the Leaving Certificate examination in 2020. The subject has been very positively received by the school community with three classes in fifth year and two classes in sixth year.
- The subject department was well supported by the senior management team who provided highly effective support for teachers to upskill in the latest LCPE curricular developments. Four members of the PE department had engaged extensively with the PDST (Professional Development Service for Teachers) and Oide for teacher professional learning (TPL) for LCPE while three members were LCPE examiners with the State Examination Commission (SEC). It is recommended a similar, collaborative approach be adopted to TPL for both JCPE and SCPE curricular developments. Senior management also supported teacher's membership of the subject association, the Physical Education Association of Ireland (PEAI).
- In each practical lesson observed, an average of twenty minutes of class time was lost due to the requirement for students to change into and out of their sports gear at the beginning and end of lessons. To ensure that the timetabled time for PE is maximised, a review of current changing arrangements should be undertaken and should include the perspectives of teachers, students and parents.
- There was a variety of specialist PE areas available at the time of inspection. Indoor facilities included a PE lab and a large, modern indoor hall with adjoining changing rooms and two equipment storage rooms. Outdoor facilities included three artificial grass pitches, two grass rugby pitches and one gravel pitch. All facilities were maintained to a high standard.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of planning and preparation observed during the evaluation was good.
- Regular formal meetings of the PE department are held, and minutes of meetings are shared with senior management. In-line with effective practice the position of subject co-ordinator for PE was rotated biennially.
- Planning and preparation for LCPE was effective. The PE department analysed LCPE examination attainment outcomes, and this was very good practice. The outcomes of this analysis should now be used to identify specific priorities and strategies to support student learning. Further work to enhance LCPE subject planning is required in order that plans reflect the specific context of the school and its students, and to lessen the extent to which the textbook guides practice.
- Planning and preparation for JCPE required improvement. While planning for JCPE (2023) was in progress with Classroom Based Assessments (CBA) conducted for the first time last year, large sections of the planning documentation referred to the now discontinued JCPE (2003) Syllabus and the PE Short course (2015).
- Half of the lessons observed involved team-teaching. There would be merit in the PE department reviewing how they plan collaboratively to improve student experiences and outcomes when team-teaching in a shared space.
- The PE department should oversee the creation and retention of student profiles for use in fitness testing to facilitate effective recording, reflection on and setting of individual and developmentally appropriate, measurable and time-bound goals.
- At the time of the inspection, planning and preparation for the SCPE Framework (2018) was not evident for TY lessons. The PE department should oversee a review of planning for SCPE and should ensure that all provision is aligned with the requirements of the Framework and fully capitalises on the excellent facilities available in the school.
- The PE department were commended for providing a wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities to students to extend their learning beyond the classroom and PE hall.

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



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For the students of Newbridge College about their learning in Physical Education

Dates of inspection:

08/09/2025 and 09/09/2025

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 **Physical Education**.

What were the main findings of the inspection?



- All PE lessons featured a respectful learning atmosphere, with teachers showing enthusiasm for the subject.
- The introduction of LCPE as an optional subject has been a very positive development.
- There was an excellent range of extra-curricular physical activities provided to students to complement the PE programme.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in **Physical Education**?



- All fifth- and sixth-year students should be timetabled for eighty minutes of non-exam PE (SCPE) every week.
- Up to 20 minutes of every PE class is lost as students have to change into and out of their gear. This practice should be reviewed by everyone in the school.
- It was recommended that students experience a broader range of activities in PE such as gymnastics, dance, athletics and outdoor adventure activities.
- The school should review how digital technology can be used to support students' learning in the PE hall.

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