

New Junior Cycle at Rockbrook Park School

Rockbrook Park School's Junior Cycle programme offers a wide range of learning experiences, seeking to meet the educational needs of all its students. Learning takes place in Rockbrook in a climate focused on the collective wellbeing of the school, of community and of society, with the student's overall experience contributing directly to their physical, spiritual, mental, emotional and social wellbeing and resilience.

A high quality curriculum (formal and informal), solid assessment, and quality teaching and learning support students in developing greater independence in learning and in meeting the challenges of life beyond school. The education received is characterised by high expectations of learners and the pursuit of excellence.

Students are provided with opportunities to be creative and innovative. The educational approach encourages participation, generates engagement and enthusiasm, and connects with life outside the school. Students are able to build on their learning to date, recognise their progress in learning and support their future learning.

The overall educational experience at Rockbrook, including its focus on character education and its universal outlook, is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcomes for all.

The learning at the core of Junior Cycle is described in the **twenty-four statements of learning**. The detailed learning outcomes for each subject are developed by subject teachers. The aim is that each student:

1. communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts (in English);
2. listens, speaks, reads and writes in Irish and one other language at a level of proficiency that is appropriate to his ability; (in English, Irish, Spanish/French)
3. creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts; (in Art Craft Design, Great Books, English, French, History Irish, Music, Spanish)
4. creates and presents artistic works and appreciates the process and skills involved; (in Art Craft Design, Artistic Performances, Great Books, English, Irish, Music, Physical Education, various clubs, choir)
5. has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making; (in Religious Education, SPHE, Wellbeing, Assembly, Character Education programme, Mentoring)
6. appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which he lives; (in CSPE, Geography, History, Irish, Modern Languages, Religious Education, Assembly, school trips)
7. values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts; (in Business Studies, CSPE, Geography, History, Wellbeing, Clanns, Clubs, Student Council, Assembly, Outings)
8. values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change; (in Great Books, CSPE, Geography, History, Religious Education, Science, school trips)
9. understands the origins and impacts of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the world around him; (in Business Studies, CSPE, Geography, History, Mathematics, school trips, competitions)
10. has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably; (in Business Studies, CSPE, Geography, Science, SPHE, Wellbeing, school clubs)

11. takes action to safeguard and promote his wellbeing and that of others; (in Guidance, Pastoral Care, Physical Education, Religious Education, SPHE, Wellbeing, school trips)
12. is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active; (in Physical Education, SPHE, Wellbeing, school clubs, clanns)
13. understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices; (Wellbeing, Physical Education, Science, SPHE, Clubs)
14. makes informed financial decisions and develops good consumer skills; (in Business Studies, CSPE)
15. recognises the potential uses of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning; (in Business Studies, Mathematics, Science)
16. describes, illustrates, interprets, predicts and explains patterns and relationships; (in All languages, Business Studies, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music, Science)
17. devises and evaluates strategies for investigating and solving problems using mathematical knowledge, reasoning and skills; (in Business Studies, Digital Media Literacy, Geography, Mathematics, Science, competitions, school clubs)
18. observes and evaluates empirical events and processes and draws valid deductions and conclusions; (in Business Studies, Geography, Mathematics, Science)
19. values the role and contribution of science and technology to society, and their personal, social and global importance; (in Digital Media Literacy, Science, Clubs)
20. uses appropriate technologies in meeting a design challenge; (in Art Craft Design, Digital Media Literacy, Music)
21. applies practical skills as he develop models and products using a variety of materials and technologies; (in Art Craft Design, school clubs)
22. takes initiative, is innovative and develops entrepreneurial skills; (inArt Craft Design, Business Studies, Artistic Performance, school clubs, school competitions)
23. brings an idea from conception to realisation; (in Art Craft Design, Business Studies, Music, Physical Education, Project work, school competitions, choir)
24. uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner (in most subjects).

The general purpose of education is to help young people acquire knowledge and learn competencies, cultivate minds with values and principles that help distinguish right from wrong, help them understand the world in which they live and the importance of family in their lives, actively promote growth in virtue, and help students build and deepen their relationship with God.

For Rockbrook to be able to effectively promote the true, the good and the beautiful, there is the vital need for coherence in word and deed. 'Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.'

Rockbrook, through its education programme, will seek to develop the following key skills in its students. These eight key skills follow the outline proposed by the NCCA in its Framework for the Junior Cycle.

Managing myself

Knowing myself, my place in the world, my relationship with God and with others

Setting and achieving personal goals; understanding commitment

Knowing how to make correct judgements; making considered decisions

Being able to reflect on my own learning

Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning

Staying well

Understanding right from wrong
Developing positive character traits through self-discipline
Being healthy and physically active
Appreciating temperance in all
Appreciating the role of family in our lives
Being spiritual
Being social
Being safe
Living fortitude
Self-confidence deriving from self-respect
Being positive about learning
Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

Communicating

Using language and number
Listening and expressing myself; understanding the need to communicate successfully with others
Performing and presenting
Discussing and debating
Using digital technology to communicate

Working with others

Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
Co-operating and team-work
Living justice and respecting difference
Appreciating the value of bearing witness to what's good
Contributing to making the world a better place; understanding how to love
Understanding the role of faith, hope and charity in our lives
Learning with others
Working with others through digital technology

Managing information and thinking

Appreciating the value of knowledge
Being able to distinguish truth from falsehood
Being curious
Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information and data
Thinking creatively and critically
Reflecting on and evaluating my learning
Using digital technology to access, manage and share content

Being creative

Imagining
Exploring options and alternatives
Appreciating the creativity of others
Understanding beauty
Implementing ideas and taking action
Learning creatively
Stimulating creativity using digital technology

Being literate

Developing my understanding and enjoyment of words and language
Reading for enjoyment and with critical understanding
Writing for different purposes
Expressing ideas clearly and accurately; communicating truth
Developing my spoken language
Exploring and creating a variety of texts including multi-modal texts

Being numerate

Expressing ideas mathematically
Estimating predicting and calculating
Developing a positive disposition towards investigating, reasoning & problem solving
Seeing patterns, trends and relationships
Gathering, interpreting and representing data, understanding how to correctly use data
Using digital technology to develop numeracy skills and understanding

Curriculum for First Year 2018/19**Entrance**

On commencement in September students will undertake standardised tests in Maths and English. The information derived from these tests together with Passport information from primary schools and STEN scores in 6th class will give the school a good understanding of the educational needs of new students.

Curriculum

During 2018/19, the new subject specifications for all subjects will now be operational. Choice is minimised so that all students undertake a wide range of academic subjects to Junior Cycle level.

By the end of the three-year Junior Cycle students will have studied eight subjects for examination purposes (Irish, English, Maths, History, Geography, Science, Spanish, Music or Art), four subjects as short courses (Art/Music, Finance, Great Questions, Latin & rhetoric), and 2 non-examinations subjects (Religion, Wellbeing – includes physical education, character education, social & civic studies). Every student will do Choir in first year. For clarity regarding the above it is our intention that all students study both Music and Art, choosing one to full subject level and the other to short-course level. The new Well Being subject incorporates the syllabus for SPHE, CSPE and Physical Education as well as some character education & guidance modules.

Classes are generally organised into mix ability groupings unless there is a decided advantage in another form of organisation. All subject teachers agree a common programme of topics in each subject and agree assessment timing and content. Each class group will be able to sit the same major examinations. The timetable for each year is finalised in late August.

Subject-teacher groups decide on the appropriate textbooks, and main points to be highlighted in 1st year programme before the end of May. The timetabling needs for the subjects are subsequently agreed between subject teachers and principal.

Progress on the first-year programme and its outcomes should be evaluated by subject teachers as part of subject teacher meetings which will be held periodically during the year. In subjects where

there is a higher / ordinary class, the results at the end of the first year will be indicative (but not necessarily conclusive) with regard to any allocation to ordinary level in second year. Parents will be consulted early in second year about any changes in subject level by a student. Parents will get feedback on student progress after the October mid-term exams and after the January mid-year exams.

There is a class division for higher and ordinary levels in Irish, English and Maths when required (but not in first year). All other subjects are taught at the higher level in mixed ability classes. In general, at Junior Cycle, a student will be required to do all the subjects on offer, unless there are special circumstances pertaining (e.g. special educational needs require that he do less subjects).

All students are required to do Irish, unless exempt. Those with an exemption from primary school will normally continue with that exemption. Irish in first year will be taught at a higher level to a mixed ability class. Division into higher and ordinary level occurs at the beginning of second year (if required). Those capable of achieving an honour in the Junior or Leaving Cert will be expected to take the higher level. The school will also seek to promote Irish through its extra-curricular programme.

All students are encouraged to study English at a higher level throughout the school, except where it is likely a student might fail the public examinations. To this end, there may not be an Ordinary level English class, even to Leaving Cert. The subject plan for English will contain a wide range of extra-curricular activity to ensure a high standard pertains (theatre, library, debating & public speaking, project work etc.).

The school currently teaches two modern languages: Spanish and French. The traditional strength of Spanish in the school and the continued advantages it has (a number of native speakers at school here, ease of summer trips to Spain, greater exchange possibilities) has led it to become the only language currently on offer in the new Junior Cycle. Where French is available (upper years) it is timetabled against Spanish.

The promotion of literacy is afforded a high priority. Literacy is a major focus for the School Improvement Plan, which also focusses on Numeracy and Assessment. The Great Books syllabus in 2nd year promotes advanced literacy, as does the reading programme in Transition Year. The new Great Civilisations course will have a literacy dimension, as will the Latin & Rhetoric course.

The teaching of Mathematics is afforded high priority in the school. All students will be taught at the higher level in First Year and a division into Higher and Ordinary level will normally occur at the end of First Year or later. Students are encouraged to stay as long as possible in the higher level group, but a balance must often be struck between securing the basics and being over-ambitious. Extra curricula activity in Maths (e.g. maths, science Olympiads) is encouraged.

All students do Science in the Junior Cycle. Subsequently, Science modules, at least two of Physics, Chemistry and Biology, are taught in Transition Year. Students have the option of studying three science subjects to the Leaving Certificate. Extra-curricular activities in Science (essays, Young Scientist, Science & Discovery Club) are actively encouraged.

History and Geography are taught throughout the school and will be compulsory until the end of Transition Year. Students may have the option of continuing both at Higher or Ordinary level to Leaving Certificate.

Business is taught in the Junior Cycle, either through the subject Business Studies or by way of a short course (Finance) and at Leaving Cert level. It may be an optional subject at Junior Cert level for

students experiencing subject overload or with special education needs. Extra-curricular activity is encouraged, especially during Transition Year. Another business subject, Economics, is available for the Leaving Cert.

Students are currently encouraged to do either Music or Art up to Junior Cert Level. From 2017 we are providing students with the option of studying both throughout Junior Cycle. Both Art and Music are also offered as Leaving Cert options, although currently they are in the same choice band.

All students must do CSPE and SPHE in the Junior Cycle in the school. These subjects are now incorporated into the Wellbeing syllabus. These courses provide good opportunities to invite external educators into the school. In such circumstances all such visits must have management approval. Useful guidelines for such visits have been provided by the DES and are followed. Training in PE/Sport for school teams or inter-school activity normally takes place outside of the standard school day.

From 2018 onwards all first and second year students will be required to commit to one Activity Club and one Learning Club during the school year. Some of these club activities may take place outside the normal school day, and so that may influence a student's choice of club. This choice will be made during the last week in August.

All Catholic students in the school are required to attend Religious Education classes. This is taught through the six years in the school, following a programme agreed by the relevant teachers. This programme is discussed annually with the diocesan religious education adviser, as required. Non-Catholics are encouraged to attend all Religious Education classes. A plan in each case is agreed with the student's parents, especially with those who are not Christian. Currently the Junior Cycle programme in Religion is not an examinable subject in the school.