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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does proximity to a Trinity linked post-primary school impact progression rates to higher education?
2. Are there certain patterns of progression present that depend on (a) whether a school is single-sex or co-educational, and (b) linkage to a certain Higher Education Institution (HEI)?



CONTEXT

At an undergraduate level in Ireland, 40% of students are classed as ‘marginally below average’ or ‘disadvantaged’, compared to just 25% in TCD (Higher Education Authority, 2020). Additionally, the DEIS scheme provides extra supports for post-primary schools that are identified as having high concentrations of children at risk of educational disadvantage in an effort to counter educational disparities (Department of Education and Youth, 2026).

METHODOLOGY

The analysis used progression rates from post-primary to higher education in Dublin from Irish School Ratings (2026), which extrapolates data from the Irish Times feeder school data. Trinity Access Programme (TAP) linked, and North-East Inner City (NEIC) TAP linked post-primary schools were plotted on Google Earth and a circle of 2km radius was drawn around each of them. Using the map section of Irish School Ratings (2026), non-DEIS post-primary schools in the vicinity of a linked school were marked on Google Earth and included in the analysis if they fell within the 2km radius (Figure 1 provides an example). Information on whether the school was all boys, all girls, or co-educational, DEIS status, and HEI linkages was taken from publicly available websites such as Government of Ireland (2026), Irish School Ratings (2026) and the respective HEI’s own website.



Figure 1



Findings and Implications

The average progression rate of non-DEIS, non fee-paying post-primary schools in Dublin (Figure 2) is 5.63% higher than non-DEIS, non fee-paying Dublin post-primary schools that are located within a 2km radius of a TAP linked school (Figure 3). The majority of those within 2km that are below the Dublin average actually fall below the average of the TAP linked schools. Figure 4 provides an overview of progression averages found.

Figure 2

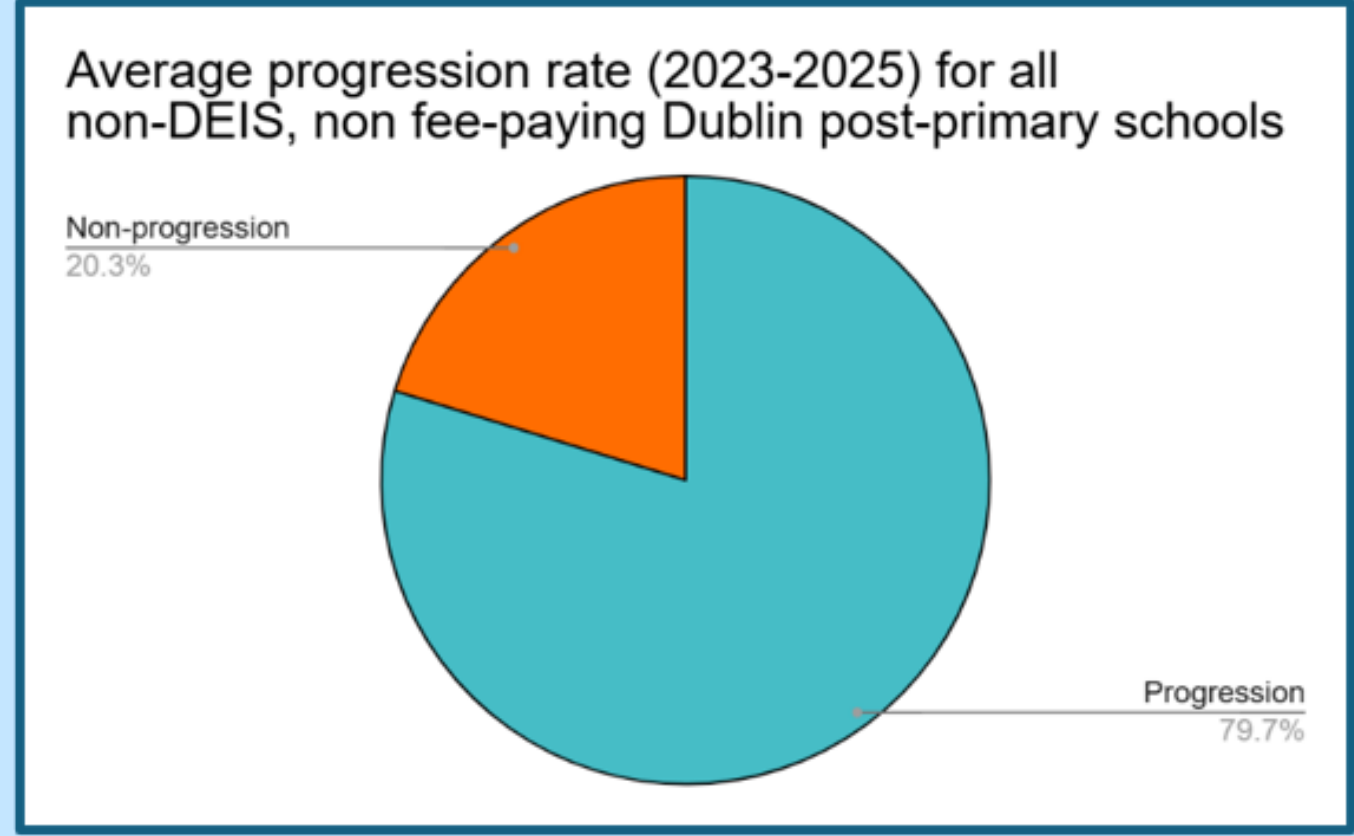
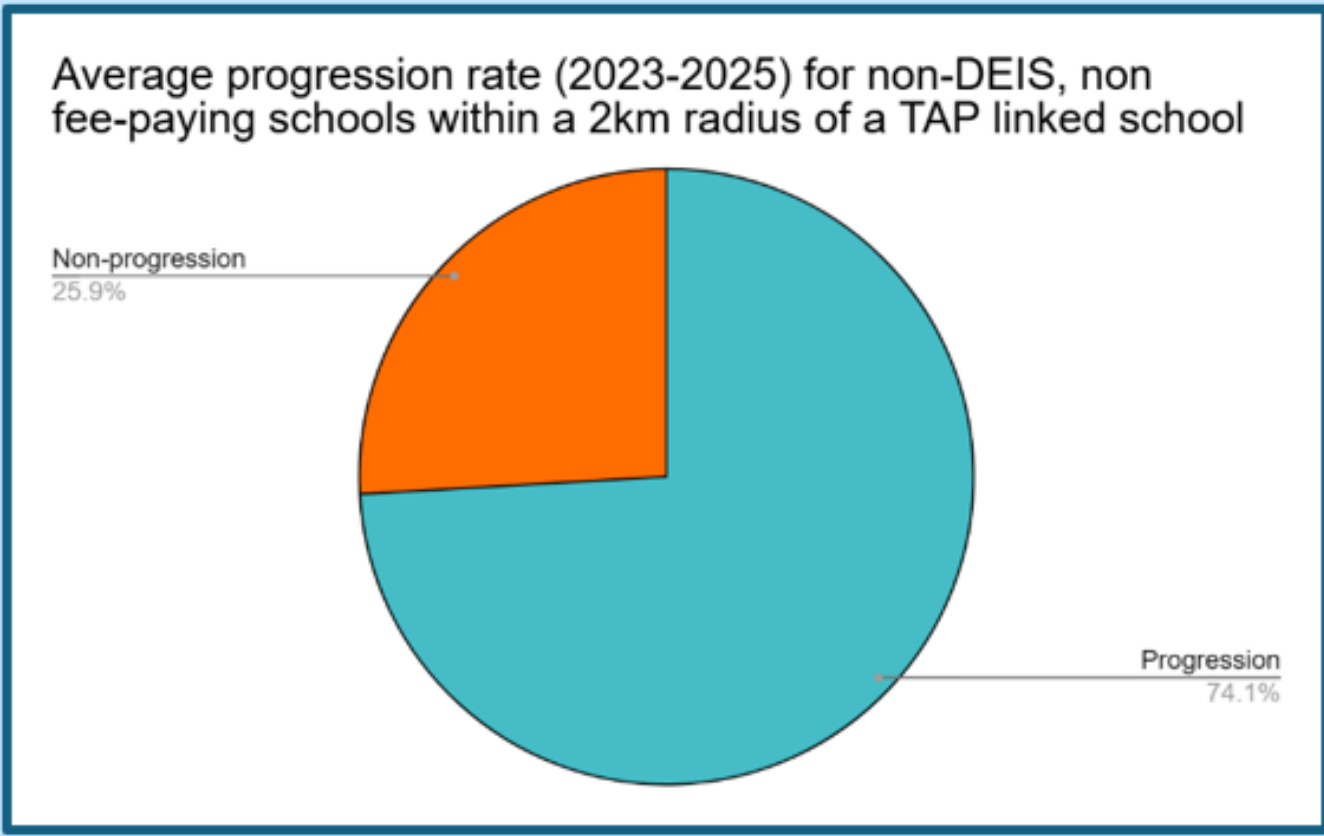


Figure 3



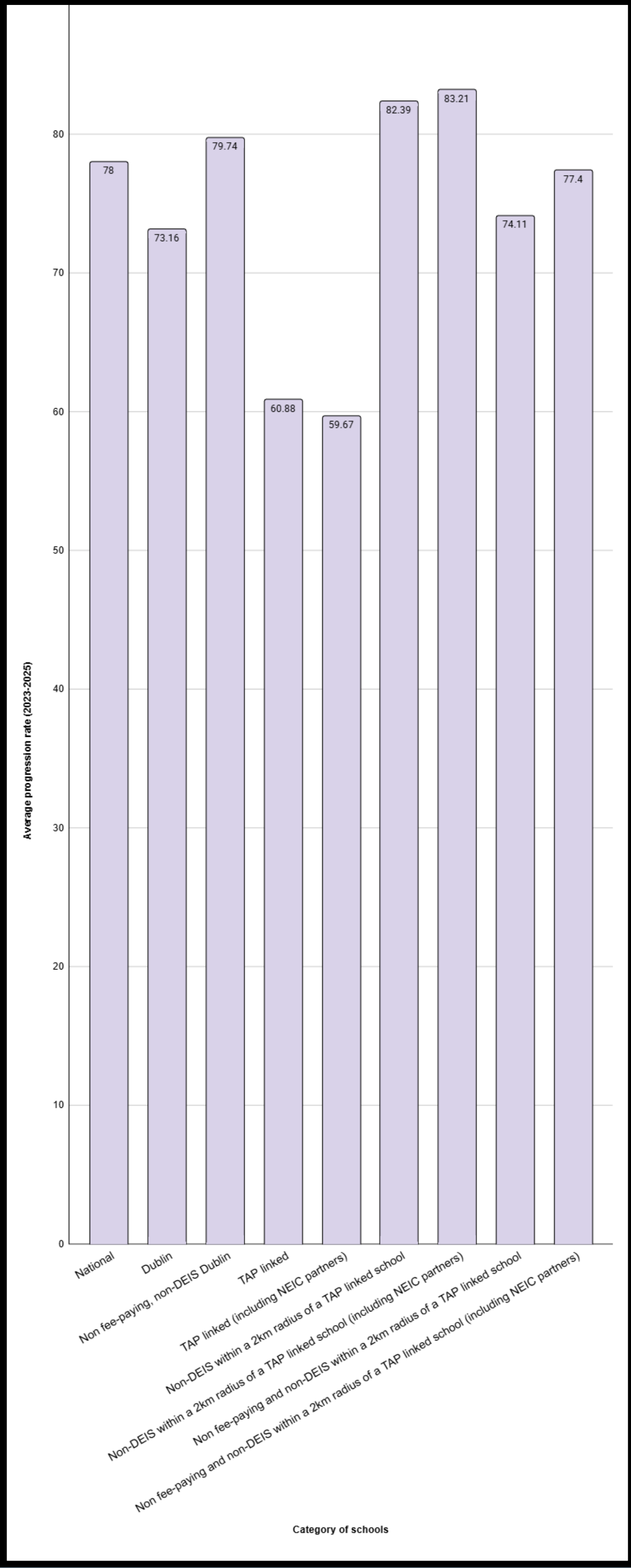
Why?

Schools not viewed as ‘in need’ of of extra supports from DEIS or HEIs may fall behind those schools seen as ‘in need’ that receive said supports.

Next steps:

Further investigation into possible partnership expansion to these schools, particularly those with progression rates below the TAP linked school average. Working with these schools that are close geographically to TAP schools may aid in tackling educational disparity on a wider community level.

Figure 4



The gap between progression rates of non-DEIS, non fee-paying Dublin schools and schools located in the vicinity of a TAP linked school becomes slimmer upon the inclusion of schools within 2km of an NEIC TAP linked school.

Why?

The socioeconomic heterogeneity of the NEIC compared to the rest of Dublin is likely a key factor. For example, the NEIC faces large amounts of financial deprivation (Doyle et al., 2022) however the newly introduced schools to the proximity-based analysis are all either located in, or directly surrounded by, above average or affluent neighbourhoods (Pobal, 2026). Additionally, the NEIC is only 1.61km squared (Dublin City Council, 2022) so a 2km radius may not most representative for this area.

Next steps:

Employment of a smaller radius may better account for the socioeconomic heterogeneity of the NEIC. Investigation into the Deprivation Index Scores (DIS) of where the student body lives, rather than where the school is located will also likely be more representative.

Girls’ schools have the highest progression rates, and co-educational schools the lowest, with a 15.6% difference between them. There are not enough boys’ schools in the sample to infer information about them.

Next steps:

Further research into the progression rates of boys’ schools and into a breakdown of progression of boys vs. girls in co-educational schools, particularly in those schools identified as having lower relative progression rates.

Post-primary schools partnered with TCD perform better than those linked with other HEIs with publically available information on their partnerships.

Next steps:

Further investigation into DIS scores of the student body is recommended again. Collaboration with other HEI access programmes or expansion of partnerships to already linked schools may also further improve community networks to higher education.

Why?

It could point towards the effectiveness of TAP’s outreach or could indicate that other HEIs are linking with students facing higher relative levels of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Why?

This may align with research on the underachievement of working class boys.