An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Clooney NS
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Carrahan Tulla Co. Clare
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	15279I
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	11-10-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	21/11/2022

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* and the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019).* 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 Mathematics under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learner experiences and teachers' practice
3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning

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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the Procedures) since the previous report to the board.
3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	11-10-2022
Inspection activities undertaken • Discussion with principal and teachers • Review of relevant documents • Pupil focus-group interview	• Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal and teachers

School context

Clooney National School is a co-educational primary school situated in the village of Clooney, County Clare. The school is under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. At the time of the evaluation, fifty-six pupils were enrolled and these were distributed across three mainstream mixed settings.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- Pupils' learning in Mathematics was of a very high quality; pupils demonstrated very positive dispositions towards Mathematics and were enthusiastic and engaged in their learning.
- The quality of teaching was highly commendable; teachers delivered a range of interesting and challenging lessons.
- Effective practices were evident in assessment and assessment data is used to inform teaching and learning.
- Whole school approaches to problem solving are impacting positively on pupils' learning.

Recommendations

- Teachers should progress the pupils' self-assessment strategies in order to equip pupils with the skills to reflect on and evaluate their own learning to further develop their own mathematical understanding.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The quality of pupils' learning was very good overall. There is progression in pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical procedures. Pupils ably articulated a range of problem solving skills and demonstrated very good outcomes in relation to number operations, lines and angles, and shape and space. They used the language of Mathematics competently and were encouraged, during the lessons observed, to explain their mathematical thinking. The whole school focus on number facts and problem solving strategies impacted positively on pupils' learning. It was evident from the focus group discussion with pupils that they enjoyed project work in Mathematics and sharing their learning with others. They identified collaborative work and digital technologies as key to enhancing their learning.

2. Supporting pupils' learning: Learner experience and teachers' practice

The quality of pupils' learning experiences was very good. Pupils' were well supported in their learning through purposeful classroom and corridor displays. Pupils were enabled to identify Mathematics in their personal lives and in the environment, in particular through the *Maths Eyes* initiative undertaken by the whole school. The school was well resourced and pupils had access to a range of relevant mathematical resources, including concrete materials, calculators and digital technology, to enhance their learning experiences.

The quality of teaching in Mathematics was very good. Teachers planned for and prepared a variety of engaging learning environments and activities to support pupils' learning. Teachers used a range of active learning methodologies including *Aistear,* pair work and group work. Teachers employed playful and discovery learning approaches including maths games, *Ready Set Go* activities and a range of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) projects. In the lessons observed, there was a good emphasis on oral mathematical skills including the use of songs and rhymes to build counting skills. Pupils were encouraged to recall tables and solve challenging problems and puzzles at the beginning of lessons. Teachers challenged and extended pupils' thinking skills through the use of mathematical language. There was very effective collaboration between all teachers.

A range of assessment strategies were evident during the inspection. Teachers used very effective questioning skills and differentiated questions successfully. Pupils' work in copies was presented neatly and was regularly monitored with feedback comments. Standardised tests were used to monitor and track pupils' achievements as they progressed through the school. The results were analysed by strand and strand units. This analysis was used to inform teaching and learning and in particular, to devise learning targets for pupils in receipt of supplementary support. Support teaching was effectively delivered through a mixture of individual and small group support and in-class interventions.

Assessment of learning practices which include teacher observations, standardised tests and teacher designed tasks were effective and informed teaching and learning. Further work is needed to progress the pupils' self-assessment strategies in order to equip pupils with the skills to reflect on and evaluate their own learning to further develop their own mathematical understanding.

3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning

The quality of whole school planning in Mathematics is very good. The school identified areas for improvement and undertook a review of current practice. They identified the areas of analytical thinking and computational skills as priority areas for development. Whole school approaches to problem solving were implemented and were evident in practice during the evaluation. The whole school plan for Mathematics outlines the language to be taught at each level. The plan should be further developed to reflect and expand on assessment practices within the school.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Clooney NS is very satisfied with the outcome of the Curriculum Evaluation of teaching & learning in the subject area of Mathematics. The board considers the report to be fair and balanced. The school will now use the findings in the report to inform ongoing school improvement planning in this subject.

The board is also satisfied to read that all requirements related to Child Protection & Safeguarding have been met. The board wishes to acknowledge the importance of pupil voice during the Curriculum Evaluation. Pupils in the focus group discussion reported how proud they were to represent their peers in discussing their learning in Mathematics.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The board and teachers are very happy that the report states in the recent Curriculum Evaluation that the overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics in our school is of a very high quality. We also note the recommendation that teachers should progress the pupils' self-assessment strategies.

We will do this by:

- Reviewing self-assessment tools for Mathematics and incorporating self-assessment tools used in other subject areas in our school in the teaching and learning of Mathematics.

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	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	*Very good* applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is *outstanding* and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	*Good* applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a *very good* standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	*Satisfactory* applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	*Fair* applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	*Weak* applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;