An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Cloontuskert National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Cloontuskert Lanesboro, County Roscommon
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18116S
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	02/10/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	10/12/2024

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 evaluated learning and teaching in Mathematics under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning outcomes
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learning 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.

Included in this curriculum evaluation 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 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) or Bí Cineálta (2024) 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.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Dates of inspection	01/10/2024-02/10/2024
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

Cloontuskert National School is a rural co-educational school located three kilometres from both Ballyleague, Co. Roscommon and Lanesboro, Co. Longford. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin. At the time of the evaluation, there were three mainstream classroom teachers and two special education teachers (SETs), including the teaching principal, and two full-time special needs assistants based in the school. There were seventy-five pupils enrolled from infants to sixth class. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics was very good.
- Very effective learning experiences were provided to support pupils' learning in Mathematics; all lessons were enriched by a playful approach to learning.
- Teaching was highly commendable; teachers prepared stimulating, maths-rich learning environments for their pupils.
- A variety of very effective assessment strategies were used to monitor pupils' progress.
- Whole-school planning, including the DEIS numeracy plan, was very effective in progressing pupils' learning in Mathematics.

Recommendations

- All teachers should support pupils in creating journals in Mathematics to enable them to document key mathematical language and procedures through words and diagrams to support them in recalling their learning.
- The model of support teaching needs to be reviewed so that special education teachers and classroom teachers can work together in the one classroom, where possible, to enable those pupils prioritised for support by the school to learn alongside their peers.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

Overall, the quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics was very good. The pupils in all learning settings were highly focused and displayed a very positive attitude towards learning in Mathematics. In the focus group discussion, conducted as part of the evaluation, almost all of the pupils reported that they liked Mathematics, that they found the problem-solving strategy they use very helpful to them and that they learned about the practical application of numeracy skills to real life situations.

Evidence from assessment data demonstrated that most pupils were making very good progress in Mathematics. Pupils worked very well independently, in pairs and in groups. Their presentation of written work in Mathematics was to a very high standard.

Pupils demonstrated a very strong knowledge of a range of strands including *Number*, *Measures* and *Shape and space*. Pupils liked the specific focus on problem-solving one day each week where they had ample opportunities to practise and make sense of mathematical word problems. They applied their problem-solving strategy confidently across a range of measures including length, money, capacity and weight. They were able to reason and justify their answers and ideas when challenged on their learning. Pupils should now be challenged to formulate mathematical problems for their peers as a progression in developing their proficiency in problem-solving.

The pupils were competent in applying various strategies to support them in their understanding of number facts. They could name the various lines and angles in the environment. They demonstrated a very good knowledge of number in the environment and its relevance in life. They demonstrated an understanding of the application of mathematical skills in various occupations. Senior pupils collected data relevant to life outside of school and represented it on charts. They showed a very good understanding of knowledge and skills through games and activities.

2. Supporting pupils' learning outcomes through learning experiences and teachers' practice

Overall, learner experiences were of a very high quality. Respectful interactions were evident among pupils and teachers and among pupils themselves. Pupils used digital technologies to engage in online mathematical games. They had access to a wide range of mathematical resources and games to support them in their learning. These resources were used effectively to consolidate mathematical concepts. Teachers should support pupils in creating learning journals for Mathematics to enable them record new mathematical concepts and language which will help them remember what they have learned and to make connections with new learning.

During the focus group discussion, pupils reported that they engaged in daily mental mathematical activities which generated lots of talk and discussion among them. Teachers confirmed that pupils undertook occasional mathematical trails. It is recommended that teachers develop trails more frequently to provide additional opportunities for pupils to learn with and from one another, to promote further talk and discussion among pupils and to extend their estimation and problem-solving skills.

The overall quality of teaching was very good. Teachers prepared stimulating, maths-rich learning environments for their pupils. All teachers were very well prepared for the lessons observed, and playful pedagogy was a feature of all lessons. They explained tasks very well, they modified the tasks to suit the varying abilities within the classroom and used very good questioning to elicit pupils' understanding. They re-voiced pupils' answers and probed pupils to enable them to elaborate on their responses. Teachers have provided meaningful contexts for learning through integration of mathematical learning into Science and through pupils' engagement in the Junior Entrepreneur Programme, where they designed business plans and worked out sale prices and profit margins.

Support was provided to pupils in Mathematics through the withdrawal of pupils individually or in groups. Mainstream class teachers, in consultation with special education teachers, should review the current models of support used in the school to maximise the potential of in-class support to better target pupils' needs. There is scope for team-teaching to be further developed so that, where possible, pupils with identified needs in Mathematics can learn alongside their peers in their own classroom.

The overall quality of assessment was very good. Teachers used data gathered from intuitive and planned interactions very effectively to monitor the pupils' progress in their learning. Pupils were provided with a range of activities to enable them to demonstrate the extent of their learning. Teachers used a variety of methodologies to seek and provide feedback to pupils, including the use of resources such as whiteboards. They used a variety of assessment methods, including teacher-designed tests, standardised test results, checklists and work samples, to monitor pupil progress.

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

Overall, the effectiveness of school planning, including the DEIS numeracy plan, in progressing pupils' learning was very good. Teachers planned for the new focus of learning and placed a very good emphasis on discussing mathematical concepts with pupils. They listed the new mathematical language being taught in their recorded preparation. Their engagement in recent teacher professional learning was reflected in their practices and approaches in the classrooms and learning settings during the evaluation.

There was evidence that the DEIS action plan for numeracy was positively impacting pupils' learning. The teachers used the school self-evaluation process to gather and analyse data and identified problem-solving as an area for improvement. The DEIS action plan was then developed collaboratively by staff and included specific targets and actions to support improvement in Mathematics. Teachers were making highly effective progress in teaching mathematical vocabulary to pupils and in providing them with a variety of concrete materials and activities to enable them to understand and explain their learning. The teachers were implementing the plan systematically.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of Cloontuskert National School about their learning in Mathematics

Date of inspection: 02/10/2024

Introduction

Your school had an inspection of Mathematics recently. This page for pupils describes what the inspector found and gives ideas about what the school should do to make learning better.

Meeting with pupils

The inspector visited classrooms and talked to teachers and pupils about the work they were doing. An inspector also met with a focus group of pupils to talk to them about their learning.

What did the inspector find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Your learning was very good in Mathematics and you showed us that you enjoyed your learning.
- Teaching was very good in the school.
- Your teachers made learning interesting and provided lots of activities for you.

What the inspector said the school should do to make learning better

- Teachers should support pupils in creating a journal for Mathematics so you can record new mathematical language and diagrams to help you remember what you have learned.
- Special education teachers and classroom teachers should teach together in the same classroom, where possible, when helping pupils who need support in their learning in Mathematics.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to pupils who took part in the focus group.

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 Cloontuskert National School is delighted to accept the very positive findings outlined in this report.

The Board of Management appreciates the inspector acknowledging that teaching in Maths was highly commendable, with teachers preparing stimulating, maths-rich environments for their pupils.

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 of Management and teaching staff of Cloontuskert National School are committed to the implementation of the recommendations as outlined in this report.

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