An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Corduff National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Lusk County Dublin
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	15650A
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	05/12/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	27/02/2025

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 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

Date of inspection	05/12/2024
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

Corduff National School is a rural primary school located in Lusk, County Dublin. It operates under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. At the time of the evaluation, there were ninety pupils enrolled from junior infants to sixth class. Staffing comprised four mainstream teachers and three special education teachers (SET), including the principal and a teacher working in a shared capacity with another local school. A teacher was employed in a part-time capacity to provide support to pupils with English as an additional language.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes was commendable: pupils demonstrated very positive dispositions to their learning in Mathematics.
- Learner experiences were of a very high quality; pupils had regular opportunities to be active in their learning as they explored alternative solution pathways.
- The quality of teachers' practice was of a very high standard.
- The quality of assessment was highly commendable with aspects of excellent practice also observed; recently implemented approaches had enhanced pupils' engagement in self-assessment.
- Whole-school planning for Mathematics was very good; all teachers were implementing practices aligned with the Primary Mathematics Curriculum.

Recommendations

- To optimise all pupils' engagement in lessons, teachers should implement agreed differentiation strategies to ensure pupils are appropriately supported and sufficiently challenged in line with their abilities, thereby enabling all pupils to progress in their learning.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning was commendable. Pupils were highly motivated and demonstrated positive dispositions towards their learning. Most pupils made use of appropriate mathematical language to communicate their learning. Pupils in the junior classes, for example, used subject-specific language competently to compare various lengths in measurement, while more senior pupils discussed the properties of shapes during a categorisation activity. An emphasis on exploratory learning allowed pupils in middle classes to investigate patterns, identify rules and make predictions. Most pupils demonstrated well-developed understanding of number concepts and operations with good recall of number facts to support procedural fluency. As a small number of pupils were less engaged in activities, there was scope to provide more

differentiated learning experiences to enable all pupils to progress in their learning. Mainstream teachers, in collaboration with special education teachers, should implement agreed actions and strategies across settings to inform the provision of more appropriately-pitched learning experiences, thereby optimising pupils' progress in learning. Notably, teachers provided pupils with meaningful opportunities to connect their learning across the curriculum and beyond to real-life experiences, enabling pupils to understand the relevance of their learning in Mathematics.

During the focus group meeting conducted during the evaluation, pupils demonstrated very positive attitudes towards their learning in Mathematics. They described the enjoyment they derived from engaging in active- learning tasks and mathematics games. Of note, were the opportunities older pupils had to work with younger pupils on specific tasks they had created. They spoke of the learning gained from working together to investigate and share alternative solutions paths to questions. They valued working in pairs to solve open-ended tasks and welcomed further opportunities to work on challenging activities with their peers.

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

Pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics were of a very high quality. Pupils worked independently and collaboratively in a purposeful manner during mathematics lessons. Most pupils enjoyed frequent opportunities to be active in their learning, and in some instances, engaged in enquiry-based learning tasks. They had access to a suitable range of mathematical resources and physical materials to support and further consolidate their understanding. Commendably, pupils across all settings were encouraged to exercise independence in determining their choice of resources to demonstrate their thinking. Pupils made meaningful use of digital technologies to further support their learning. Where learning was most effective, pupils had opportunities to work with their peers on collaborative problem-solving activities in a sustained manner, enabling them to discuss, explain, justify and extend their mathematical thinking. Such open-ended problem-solving tasks prompted deeper engagement and should become a more consistent feature of mathematics lessons.

The quality of teachers' practice was of a very high standard. Teachers interacted with pupils in a respectful manner. They encouraged all pupils and affirmed their contributions to class discussions. All lessons were well structured and teachers made use of a variety of independent and collaborative learning tasks to support pupils' sustained engagement. They linked new learning to pupils' prior knowledge, enabling pupils to build on their existing understanding. Teachers provided language-rich mathematical displays and modelled the use of subject-specific language. They made effective use of questioning, allowing pupils appropriate time to reflect on their responses before sharing their mathematical thinking. There was scope for teachers to make greater use of higher-order questions to challenge more able pupils.

Supplementary support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) was provided through a flexible combination of in-class team teaching and individual and group withdrawal. Teachers had compiled comprehensive support plans and, commendably, had sought feedback from the pupils in identifying and setting targets. While learning targets were reflective of pupils' prioritised needs, they were too broad to effectively guide incremental progress in learning. Going forward, teachers should ensure targets and corresponding actions are sufficiently specific to guide teaching and learning across all settings, thereby optimising the impact on pupils' progress.

The quality of assessment was highly commendable with aspects of excellent practice also observed. An analysis of standardised test results at a whole-school level had been undertaken and was used to inform the identification of pupils in need of additional support. Teachers used a broad range of assessment methodologies including teacher-designed tasks, checklists and teacher observations to monitor pupils' progress and inform next steps in learning. Pupils were enabled to reflect on their learning at the end of lessons, noting areas of strength and challenge. Commendably, teachers had implemented a number of whole-school approaches to support pupils' engagement in assessment. These approaches included the provision of regular feedback to junior pupils and their parents through their homework copies and sheets, the use of shared online reflection logs in the senior classes, and opportunities for pupils to record their

thoughts about their learning in their mathematics journals. Such exemplary practices had impacted positively on pupils' progress and had enhanced their sense of ownership of their own learning.

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

Whole-school planning for Mathematics was very good. All teachers were reflective in implementing practices aligned with the Primary Mathematics Curriculum. Recent cycles of school self-evaluation, while not having focused specifically on Mathematics, had led to improvements in aspects of provision. Recently implemented assessment practices were impacting positively on pupils' learning; an emphasis on pupil participation had enhanced pupils' ownership of their own learning. The use of digital technology had been embedded meaningfully in pupils' learning experiences. Pupils made purposeful use of technology to enhance their understanding, present their mathematical thinking and in the senior classes, to record their progress in learning.

Commendably, the principal and teachers fostered a culture focused on developing improvements in practice. They had implemented different pedagogies aligned to the Primary Mathematics Curriculum and were evaluating the impact on pupils' learning to inform the review of mathematics plans.

Teachers had engaged in professional learning aligned with the priority needs of the school and through sharing their insights and practices, were enhancing teaching and learning in Mathematics for all.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of Corduff N S about their learning in Mathematics
Date of inspection: 05/12/2024

Introduction

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

Meeting with pupils

The inspector(s) 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(s) find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Pupils enjoyed opportunities to investigate and discuss various solutions to mathematics questions.
- Pupils were enabled to choose the most suitable resources to best show their mathematical thinking.
- Teachers created very good lessons in which pupils had opportunities to work together using suitable resources.

What the inspector(s) said the school should do to make learning better

- Teachers should allow pupils more opportunities to work together on challenging tasks and ensure all pupils can progress in their learning.

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 welcomes this maths evaluation. Maths is valued and enjoyed by the pupils and staff at Corduff NS. The evaluation affirms our high standards and will help to inform the ongoing school self-evaluation action plan to enhance the delivery of all aspects of the new Primary Maths Curriculum (PMC).

We are happy with the recognition the evaluation gives to our pupils for their engagement and enthusiasm in maths learning and to their parents who have supported the investment in new maths resources to deliver the PMC. We are proud the evaluation recognises that our dedicated staff work as a team to plan and provide effective and inclusive teaching, learning and assessment to meet a diversity of pupil strengths, needs and learning styles. We are also pleased that the report recognises our current focus on developing pupil voice and pupil agency in learning, ongoing improvements in assessment practices and the effective use of digital technologies.

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

We have convened one Board meeting and two staff meetings since the verbal feedback was received from the inspectorate on 5th December 2024 and we have reviewed the written report dated 21st January 2025. We have devised an action plan that will commence in February 2025.

The one recommendation in the evaluation report concerns optimising our progress in ensuring that we are consistently differentiating teaching and learning to meet the strengths and needs of every child and enabling every child to progress in their learning. We have also noted three observations in the evaluation report, which inform this recommendation. The first is to ensure that targets and actions to support specific pupil needs are more incremental and specific in guiding teaching and learning in the classroom and support contexts. There is scope for the more consistent use of sustained open-ended problem-solving learning tasks among the children. There is also scope for teachers to make greater use of higher-order questions to challenge more able pupils.

Our first action is to continue to develop our knowledge and practice in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to optimise how we design teaching, learning and assessment in an inclusive way to benefit all pupils. We will schedule professional development activities on each of the three UDL principles during terms 2 and 3 in 2024-2025. In particular, we will focus on developing our effectiveness in providing multiple means of engagement for our pupils.

Our second action is to continue to develop our collaborative planning and assessment practices. Specifically, we will trial new ways to allow classroom teachers and support teachers to share two-way information about a learner's current needs, learning activities and progress in a more timely, regular and incremental manner. This will be discussed and evaluated at staff meetings during terms 2 and 3 in 2024-2025.

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