An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N Bríde
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Suncroft Curragh Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18031K
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	21/03/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	17/06/2024

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

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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.

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	20/03/24 - 21/03/2024
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

Scoil Náisiúnta Bríde is a co-educational primary school situated in the village of Suncroft, Co. Kildare. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. It participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) rural programme, the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion. At the time of the evaluation, the school had three mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers (SETs), one of whom was the principal. The school had an enrolment of forty-six pupils.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning was very good; pupils presented as highly motivated learners and demonstrated positive attitudes towards Mathematics.
- Overall, the quality of learners' experiences was of a very high standard; pupils actively engaged in a range of activities using relevant resources to deepen their understanding of Mathematics.
- The quality of teaching was highly commendable; teachers implemented a range of effective teaching approaches and methodologies to encourage pupils' active participation in lessons.
- School planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), was very effective in progressing pupils' learning: the school plan provided valuable guidance in relation to the teaching of mathematical language and skills across multi-grade settings.

Recommendations

- To consolidate pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts, teachers should encourage pupils to apply their learning in Mathematics to a variety of contexts, including real-life situations.
- To enhance pupils' ability to discuss and explain the processes used in mathematical activities, it is recommended that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to interact and collaborate with one another to solve mathematical problems.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning was very good, and pupils demonstrated positive attitudes towards Mathematics. They were motivated to learn and enjoyed participating in mathematical activities. They demonstrated the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the curriculum. Pupils had the ability to recall and define number facts and use suitable computational procedures. Most pupils were able to justify and explain the answers and methods used to solve mathematical problems using appropriate mathematical language.

In infant and junior classes, pupils competently sorted, classified, matched, compared, and ordered sets of objects. They counted and combined sets and read, wrote, and ordered numerals. In middle classes, pupils demonstrated their understanding of the concept of length within the *Measures* strand. They identified the correct measuring instruments and the most appropriate strategies for estimating and measuring the length of different items. Pupils were able to estimate, compare, measure and record lengths of objects in the classroom. Senior class pupils demonstrated their conceptual understanding of the relationship between fractions and decimals using manipulatives and paper-folding. They capably used appropriate strategies to solve problems involving fractions, decimals and percentages and demonstrated their understanding of the relationships between them.

There was evidence that pupils were able to make purposeful connections between their mathematical learning in school and the use of mathematics in the real world. There was scope to extend the development of this skill to consolidate pupils' learning. Teachers are advised to encourage pupils to apply their learning in Mathematics to a variety of contexts, including real-life situations.

During the focus group discussion, pupils spoke positively and articulately about their learning in Mathematics. They reported that they enjoyed playing mathematical games and being active in their learning. They found that the use of concrete materials made learning in Mathematics more interesting. They stated that they particularly enjoyed working together and would like to do more collaborative work in Mathematics.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences was of a very high standard. Teachers provided stimulating, mathematics-rich learning environments. Visual displays were a feature in almost all learning settings and mathematics displays supported and scaffolded pupils' learning in addition to celebrating their work. Classrooms were well-structured and well-managed in a manner that enhanced learner experiences. There was a positive climate in classrooms and interactions between teachers and pupils were highly respectful and affirming. The quality of support for pupils' well-being was highly effective in meeting the needs of pupils in Mathematics.

Pupils engaged purposefully in meaningful learning activities and they had opportunities to work both independently and collaboratively on mathematics tasks. Teachers provided a range of interactive and enquiry-based activities in infant and junior classes where playful pedagogies were implemented to an exceptionally high standard. In middle and senior classes, pupils actively completed a range of tasks using a variety of stimulating resources. The tasks were designed to facilitate the development of pupils' estimation and reflective skills. Most pupils had the ability to communicate their learning in a range of ways. To enhance the development of these skills, it is recommended that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to interact and collaborate with one another to solve mathematical problems.

The quality of teachers' practice was highly commendable. All teachers were well-prepared for lessons. Teachers selected and used teaching approaches appropriate to the intended learning outcomes and to pupils' learning needs. Lessons were well-planned and resources were well-organised. Teachers used skilful questioning techniques to assess pupils' prior knowledge and to extend their thinking. Teachers modelled high quality language and placed a strong emphasis on pupils' use of key mathematical vocabulary and language in their responses.

The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs was very good. The level and nature of support provided reflected the specific needs of pupils as set out in Student Support Files. Pupils' learning progress was carefully monitored and recorded. Student Support Files had been developed collaboratively by SETs and classroom teachers. The school has been very successful in introducing and implementing a range of interventions, differentiated programmes and new approaches to support the evolving needs of pupils in Mathematics.

The overall quality of assessment was very good. Teachers selected and used preparation and assessment practices to progress pupils' learning. Each teacher maintained an assessment folder for each class in which pupils' learning outcomes in standardised tests, termly tests, teacher-designed tests and teacher observations were recorded. Data from assessment outcomes was analysed and used to plan and review pupils' learning progress in Mathematics.

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

Whole-school planning, including SSE, was highly effective in progressing pupils' learning. School leaders led the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation. They actively promoted a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation, and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment in the school. Teachers worked collaboratively to design a whole-school plan for Mathematics that provided good guidance for teaching and learning. The six-step school self-evaluation process was used to identify aspects of improvement for mathematics teaching and learning. At the time of the evaluation, the school was preparing to introduce aspects of the new Primary Mathematics Curriculum into the school.

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