An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Maodhóg
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Currin Ballyconnell County Cavan
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	17440W
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	28-09-2022

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 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 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	28-09-2022
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

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Maodhóg is a rural co-educational school which is under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kilmore. The current enrolment is sixty-one pupils. The school has three mainstream teachers, one special education teacher (SET) and one part-time special education teacher based in another school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics was good; pupils demonstrated a good ability to compute accurately.
- The overall quality of pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics was good; pupils were actively engaged in their learning.
- Overall, the quality of assessment was good.
- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) was good; the approaches used including estimation and recall of number facts supported pupils in their learning.
- The quality of whole-school planning for Mathematics was good; an effective whole school approach to the teaching of problem-solving was developed using the school self-evaluation (SSE) process.

Recommendations

- The teachers should provide pupils with further structured opportunities prioritising the use of new language during collaborative tasks to embed learning.
- Teaches should develop whole-school approaches to assessment including the incremental progression of pupils' peer and self-assessment practices to further enhance learning opportunities for pupils.
- All teachers should ensure that pupils with identified needs have targets in their support plans, which are informed by their priority learning needs, and are specific and measurable so that progress can be easily identified and recorded.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics was good. Pupils enjoyed Mathematics and were motivated to learn. Pupils demonstrated a good ability to compute accurately, they had a good understanding of concepts and were able to connect mathematics to real-life contexts successfully.

In the lessons observed, pupils had a good awareness of and an ability to implement a range of mathematical skills. Pupils engaged very well in lessons particularly where they were actively

involved in their learning and used practical investigations to predict, discuss and record their mathematical computations.

Pupils understood concepts and recalled terminology, facts and definitions to a high standard. They used computational procedures and a variety of strategies to solve problems, justify and explain their answers and methods. Pupils used appropriate estimation strategies to a good standard. They worked independently and completed tasks using manipulatives successfully. Pupils were exposed to new mathematical terminology during lessons in Mathematics. However, they would benefit from further structured opportunities prioritising the use of the new language during collaborative tasks.

Pupils in the focus group unanimously spoke of their enthusiasm and appreciation for Mathematics. They spoke positively about their use of Mathematics during the Junior Entrepreneur programme. They demonstrated an appreciation of the use of Mathematics in other areas of the curriculum and they especially enjoyed using the outdoor environment for maths trails and using their outdoor classroom.

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

The overall quality of pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics was good. High levels of interest and participation during lessons in Mathematics were observed and this was supported by pupils being actively involved in their learning and using concrete materials. Pupils received high quality opportunities to use the outdoor environment during their Mathematics lessons and enjoyed using active methodologies and digital learning technologies (DLTs) in the recall of number facts.

Overall teaching was of a good quality and all teachers demonstrated highly effective classroom management skills. It was evident that classroom practices including whole-class and small-group activities were having a positive impact on pupils' learning. During the evaluation, teachers were observed facilitating gainful, active and progressive learning in the strands of *Number and Data*. There was effective use of questioning to elicit, affirm and extend appropriate responses from the pupils. Lessons observed during the evaluation were well structured and a suitable range of methodologies was employed. Teachers explicitly referenced the language of Mathematics during lessons and, where very good practice was observed, there was very good development of the skills of applying and problem solving, reasoning and understanding and recalling. All teachers employed an effective blend of methodologies including structured whole-class teaching, small-group and individual teaching. Commendably, teachers cultivated a positive mathematical learning environment where pupils' interests were used to motivate them and where they were appropriately supported, encouraged and affirmed. Effective questioning techniques were used to ascertain pupils' understanding and application of mathematical concepts. Teachers should share the specific success criteria with pupils throughout lessons to support pupils' progression in learning. Pupils would benefit from being more aware of the specific success criteria during lessons.

The overall quality of assessment was good. All teachers had assessment files and were collecting valuable data on pupils' progress. Standardised test were administered annually. All teachers should analyse data relating to the specific strands to inform future planning for differentiation. It is recommended that pupils' self- and peer-assessment practices should be developed in all classes to enhance learning opportunities for pupils.

Support for pupils with special educational needs was good overall. The approaches used, including estimation and recall of number facts, supported pupils in their learning. Teachers should ensure that all pupils with identified needs have support plan targets which are informed by pupils' priority learning needs and that the targets set are specific and measurable so that progress can be easily identified and recorded.

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

The overall quality of school planning for Mathematics was good. Teachers worked collaboratively to devise a whole-school plan for Mathematics. A learning culture of continuous improvement and professional development was promoted by school leadership based on identified needs in the area of Mathematics. Teachers' collective practice was a strength of this school. They engaged in regular collaboration in Mathematics, where good practice was shared resulting in an improvement in teaching approaches. The school should now consider the development of skills and concepts to support pupils in their learning.

The review of Mathematics using the SSE process had resulted in improvements in problem-solving and the school had developed a uniform approach in the use of whole-school strategies in this area.

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 S.N. Naomh Maodhóg 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

We note the recommendations made and these will be addressed as part of the review of our Maths Curriculum Whole-School Plan which is currently in progress.

We are happy that the recent Curriculum Evaluation Report acknowledges that the overall quality of pupils' learning and that the pupils learning experience in Mathematics in our school is good.

We note the recommendation that we could have further structured opportunities prioritising new language during collaborative tasks. Teachers will put a greater emphasis on maths language used throughout lessons, referring to a bank of maths language which will be on display.

To support pupils' progression in learning throughout lessons, teachers will refer to the learning objectives at the beginning of each lesson and review at the end of the lesson, using various strategies including WALT, WILF and KWL.

We note the recommendation that all teachers should analyse data to ensure appropriately differentiated opportunities for all pupils. This is something that we will attempt to address as a staff over the course of this school year. We will do this by:

- Reviewing assessment tools for Mathematics.
- Reviewing how assessment data in Mathematics is used by class teachers.
- Review how differentiation is recorded in Classroom Support Plans.
- Encouraging teachers to consider opportunities for CPD in the area of differentiation.

We are pleased that the report finds that the quality of assessment in the school is good. We accept that pupil's self and peer assessment practices should be developed in all classes to enhance learning opportunities for pupils. Strategies for each class level will be discussed at our planning meetings and included in our updated Whole-School Plan for Mathematics.

We are happy that the inspection report acknowledges that the quality of support for pupils with special education needs (SEN) is good. The special education teacher will work closely with the principal and class teachers to ensure that all children with identified needs have a support plan with targets that are specific and measurable.

Finally, the school staff will take a collaborative approach to the development of skills and concepts to support pupils in their learning. A plan for each class level will be drawn up, and referred to in short term planning documents.

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;