An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Lorcáin BNS
Seoladh na scoile/School address	St. John's Park Waterford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18462O
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	05/02/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	24/03/2025

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999),* the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)* and the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum.* 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 inspectors 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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Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	05/02/2025 – 06/02/2025
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 Lorcáin is a primary school for boys located in Waterford City. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore and participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme. At the time of the evaluation, there were 339 pupils enrolled. The school is led by an administrative principal and has a teaching staff comprising eighteen mainstream class teachers, ten full-time special education teachers and one special education teacher shared with another school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of learner outcomes in Mathematics was commendable. Pupils demonstrated a positive disposition towards the subject, engaged meaningfully in lessons, and benefited from well-structured, active learning environments.
- Pupils had beneficial opportunities to use mathematical resources to support their learning, and they were provided with high-quality, active learning experiences.
- Teachers' practice was of a good standard; purposeful lessons were provided for pupils.
- Assessment was effective, with a range of approaches used to capture learning.
- The impact of school planning in progressing pupils' learning was very good. The school demonstrated clear intention in its planning, promoting consistency and innovation in the teaching of Mathematics.

Recommendations

- Mainstream and special education teachers collaborated effectively. It is now timely to refine the roles of the mainstream and special education teachers during periods of in-class support, ensuring that in all instances, special education teachers have a clear purpose and are supporting the priority learning needs of pupils.
- Although there was a focus on the development of mathematical language throughout the school, pupils in many classes did not have sufficient opportunities to apply this language to mathematical sense-making. Teachers should focus on aspects of mathematical talk to provide further opportunities for reasoning and justification of mathematical ideas and concepts.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning outcomes in Mathematics was commendable. Pupils engaged well with their learning and showed enthusiasm for mathematical tasks. Across all class levels, pupils approached the subject with confidence, curiosity, and a willingness to

explore new concepts. Their mathematical knowledge was applied in real-world contexts, reinforcing their ability to connect classroom learning with everyday situations.

Junior pupils demonstrated secure foundational numeracy skills, showing confidence in working with 2-D shapes, ordinal numbers, and early number operations. Many recognised patterns in their environment, and their ability to apply number skills was evident. Pupils in the middle classes explored mathematical equivalence through fractions and developed competence in estimating and measuring. They also demonstrated a good standard of data analysis and interpretation. Senior pupils successfully applied mathematical concepts in practical contexts including games and problem solving scenarios. Pupils in the focus group displayed a strong understanding of the application of Mathematics to real life situations such as sport, shopping, decorating and cooking.

Pupils responded well to questioning and some explained their thinking with increasing confidence. A positive attitude towards Mathematics was evident, and pupils engaged well in both individual and collaborative tasks. They worked effectively in pairs and groups, discussing strategies and in the best instances exploring multiple solutions. Practical tasks such as mathematical trails, hands-on measurement activities, and problem-solving challenges deepened their learning and engagement. Although there was a focus on the development of mathematical language throughout the school, pupils in many classes did not have sufficient opportunities to apply this language to mathematical sense-making. Teachers should focus on aspects of mathematical talk to provide further opportunities for reasoning and justification of mathematical ideas and concepts. Commendably the school have started to employ math journals to explore pupils' mathematical understanding.

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

The quality of learning experiences provided by teachers was of a high standard. Teachers planned purposeful and engaging lessons that incorporated a range of hands-on activities, digital resources, and real-life applications to support pupils’ mathematical understanding. Pupils engaged in purposeful experiences using concrete materials such as counting cubes, fraction walls, and number lines, which supported their conceptual development. Whole-school initiatives such as *Ready, Set, Go Maths*, *Mata sa Rang*, and *Maths Lift Off* were effectively implemented to support differentiation and promote progression in learning. Pupils benefited from well-structured opportunities to apply their learning in meaningful contexts. Maths Week was used to reinforce key concepts through mathematical trails, number hunts, and estimation challenges. Digital technologies, including iPads and quick response (QR) codes, were used successfully to promote interactive learning. Coding activities for 4th to 6th classes, delivered through the *Digital Skills Curriculum*, further enhanced pupils’ problem-solving and computational thinking skills. Cross-curricular links were promoted, with pupils applying measurement and time concepts in cooking activities and PE.

The overall quality of teachers’ practice was good. Lessons were generally well-structured and purposeful, incorporating a range of methodologies to engage pupils and support progression in learning. Teachers used effective questioning and guided discussions to develop pupils’ mathematical understanding. A variety of high-quality resources, including concrete materials, digital technologies, and structured programmes effectively supported differentiation. The use of maths journals in some classes encouraged reflection and consolidation of learning.
Teachers collaborated regularly in their year groups to plan and refine approaches, using assessment data to inform targeted interventions. Standardised test results were systematically analysed by teachers and school leaders, leading to a whole-school focus on problem-solving and an increased emphasis on measure, particularly time. Special education teachers were well-integrated into classroom practice, with a mix of in-class support and targeted withdrawal sessions ensuring that interventions were purposeful and responsive to pupils' needs. It is now timely to refine the reciprocal role of the mainstream and special education teachers during

periods of in-class support, ensuring that in all instances, special education teachers have a clear purpose and are supporting the priority learning needs of pupils. Teachers demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous professional development (CPD) and had proactively engaged with the new *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* (PMC). Whole-staff CPD sessions, collaborative planning, and structured implementation strategies ensured a consistent approach to incorporating new methodologies aligned with the PMC.

The quality of assessment in Mathematics was good, with a range of strategies effectively used by teachers to monitor progress and inform teaching. Teachers employed a combination of formative and summative assessments, including observation, checklists, standardised tests, and structured discussions. In many classes, teachers had begun to use math journals to encourage pupils to reflect on their learning. Of note, copybooks were used throughout the school to very good effect to capture and feedback on pupils' learning. These copybooks were carefully presented and maintained. Assessment data was systematically analysed to guide whole-school initiatives, such as a focus on problem-solving in junior classes and an increased emphasis on measure in senior classes. Teachers adapted instruction based on assessment outcomes, ensuring learning was responsive to pupils' needs. Special education teachers collaborated closely with mainstream teachers to provide targeted interventions aligned with assessment findings.

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

Whole-school planning in Mathematics was very effective, with clear priorities set through the DEIS Plan. Standardised assessment data was systematically analysed by teachers and school leaders to identify key areas for development, ensuring a responsive and targeted approach to improving pupils' learning. The whole school mathematics plan provided structured guidance on concept progression, problem-solving strategies, and mathematical language. A consistent, school-wide approach to maths language and operations was revised annually, ensuring continuity across all class levels. The DEIS Plan prioritised problem-solving in junior classes and a focus on measure, particularly time, in 3rd to 6th classes. Daily computational fluency practice was embedded at all levels.

Professional learning and collaboration were central to the school's approach. Teachers engaged in reflection and planning following their initial Primary Mathematics Curriculum in-service day and Croke Park meetings facilitated collaborative planning. Special education teachers and mainstream teachers worked closely to deliver targeted interventions through flexible in-class support models. Whole-school initiatives, such as *Maths Week*, reinforced engagement through practical applications, including maths trails, estimation challenges, and STEM-based investigations. Cross-curricular integration ensured that pupils applied mathematical concepts in real-life contexts.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of Scoil Lorcain BNS about their learning in Mathematics
Date of inspection: 05/02/2025 - 06/02/2025

Introduction

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

What did the inspectors do during the visit?

The inspectors 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 inspectors find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Pupils did really well in Maths, enjoying lessons and learning in fun, active ways.
- There were lots of great resources to help pupils understand Maths better.
- Teachers planned clear and engaging lessons to help everyone learn.
- Different ways of checking progress helped teachers see how well pupils were doing.
- The school planned Maths carefully, making sure lessons were consistent and exciting.

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

- Teachers worked well together, special education teachers can have a more flexible role in lessons to make sure they are helping pupils in the best way possible.
- Pupils would benefit from more opportunities to use Maths language in discussions, with teachers guiding them to explain their thinking more clearly.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to the 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 welcomes the publication of the Curriculum Evaluation Report on the teaching of Mathematics in Scoil Lorcáin B.N.S and commends the staff and pupils on the very positive findings therein. The BOM considers the report to be balanced and fair. We are satisfied that the hard work, preparation, collaboration and expertise of our staff was recognised in the report.

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 BOM welcomes all the recommendations made and will seek to implement them over the coming months.

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