An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil na mBráithre
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Doon Co Limerick
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	16713D
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	05/11/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	16/01/2025

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 (2023).* 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

Date of inspection	05/11/2024
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 na mBráithre is located in Doon, Co. Limerick. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel and Emly and caters for boys from second to sixth class. It has three mainstream class teachers and one full-time special education teacher. A second, part-time special education teacher provides some support to the school on a fortnightly basis. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department of Education's action plan for inclusion. The current enrolment is fifty-one pupils.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of learning outcomes was very good; most pupils could ably apply and connect their learning to the real-world.
- Very high-quality learning experiences were provided for pupils; they used their mathematical skills of reasoning, applying and communicating to display and extend their understanding of concepts.
- The quality of teaching was very good overall, with excellent practice noted in some settings.
- The quality of teacher-led assessment was very good.
- Planning to progress pupils' learning, both at whole-school and individual class levels was very good.

Recommendations

- Teachers should introduce a mechanism to support pupils to identify their own achievement and to help them to co-construct the next steps in their learning with their teachers.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

- The overall quality of pupils learning outcomes was very good. Observation of lessons and interaction with pupils provided strong evidence of their capacity to think mathematically and to apply and connect their learning to the real world. Most demonstrated proficiency in using and applying counting strategies.

- Junior pupils labelled numbers as odd and even, while senior pupils ably rounded numbers, estimated values and categorised numbers as prime and composite. Pupils in middle classes successfully compared and expressed fractions in equivalent terms. Senior pupils used appropriate mathematical language to convey their understanding and to calculate perimeter in purposeful contexts. They successfully explored the periphery of shapes using digital applications and collaborated to present models of irregular shape boundaries on geoboards.
- Pupils' computational thinking was at a very high standard and they posed challenging problems for their peers on the range of topics observed during the evaluation. They knew the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and could classify them based on their ability to stack and to roll. They identified base units for length, weight and capacity and successfully estimated measures for typical food items. They could connect new and previous learning, and many were confident in sharing their mathematical ideas with their peers. Pupils enthusiastically described recent activities that had focused on developing their ability to see Mathematics in the environment and to use it as a tool to help them to understand their world.

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

- The pupils enjoyed a broad range of learning experiences in Mathematics. These included activities that encouraged all pupils to use their skills in reasoning and communicating to suggest the odd one out in a series of numbers. They also had to justify and provide reasons for their selection. Pupils worked independently and in pairs to solve puzzles using concrete materials. Target boards were used to very good effect to consolidate number facts and pupils used digital games to perfect skills in tables and recognition of number patterns.
- The pupils in the focus group expressed very positive attitudes to their learning in Mathematics. They described an increased emphasis on games, use of digital technologies, and active learning in recent months. They outlined their practical use of Mathematics in baking classes, in monitoring the progress of school leagues and in the financial management of a recent bake sale. They expressed satisfaction with the introduction and use of maths journals to record significant learning achievements.
- They reported that they would welcome increased opportunities to learn outdoors and to use maths trails on a more frequent basis. Although these pupils were unaware of the new Primary Mathematics Curriculum, the experiences they described provided evidence that it was being implemented in a highly effective manner.
- The overall quality of teaching in both mainstream and the special education contexts was very good with excellent practice noted in some settings. Teachers ensured that pupils knew the learning intention in lessons. Where teaching was of a particularly high standard, teachers planned for and presented structured, highly engaging lessons. An appropriate level of challenge was incorporated to ensure that all pupils achieved success. The school operated some time-bound initiatives to challenge more able pupils. It is advised that teachers collaboratively explore their capacity to extend the learning potential for the significant cohort of pupils who are doing very well at Mathematics.
- The quality of assessment was very good. Annual analysis of the outcomes of standardised testing was used to select pupils for additional support and to monitor overall school attainment across the strands of the curriculum. All teachers

maintained assessment information and, in some instances, this data was annotated by teachers to guide learning pathways for individual pupils. It is recommended that teachers introduce a mechanism to support pupils in assessing their own mathematical achievement and to help them to co-construct with their teachers, the next steps in their learning. As maths journals have been introduced, there is potential to use these personalised records of learning in a more formal manner to support pupils in self-assessing their progress.

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

- Planning to progress pupils' learning, both at whole-school and individual class levels was very good. The principal provided excellent leadership for learning. Supported by the deputy principal, she led the school community to continuously strive for excellence by setting high expectations for pupils. She promoted a culture of continuous improvement by supporting colleagues to become reflective practitioners. Very good work had been undertaken on the implementation of the DEIS plan across all themes. The DEIS plan for numeracy impacted positively on pupils' learning outcomes.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of Scoil na mBráithre about their learning in Mathematics

Date of inspection: 05/11/2024

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. The 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:

- Learning was at a high standard and the pupils had lots of interesting activities in Maths lessons.
- Teachers worked hard to prepare for lessons and set challenging tasks for the pupils.
- Teachers knew how well each pupil was doing in Mathematics and they also knew about the areas that needed a little more work.

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

- Teachers should work with individual pupils to agree the parts of learning that need to improve.

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

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

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 this Curriculum Evaluation Report on the teaching of Mathematics in Scoil na mBráithre and commends the staff and pupils on the very positive findings therein.

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

In Scoil na mBráithre we value and promote a culture of continuous self-evaluation and improvement and therefore the Board of Management welcomes the recommendation made in this report.

The whole school plan for Mathematics will be revised following implementation of the new Primary Mathematics Curriculum in September 2025. The teachers will undertake professional development on the principles and key competencies and implementation of the new curriculum.

Following this the staff, in collaboration with all the stakeholders will formulate a revised plan for mathematics which will be implemented in line with the new PMC.

The recommendation in this report to introduce a mechanism to support pupils to identify their own achievement and to help them to co-construct the next steps in their own learning with their teachers will be addressed in the context of the overall revised plan as follows:

- The plan will embed the approach of using open tasks to develop discussion and exploration of multiple correct pathway solutions to mathematical problems.

- The plan will extend and embed the provision of cognitively challenging high ceiling tasks which provide all pupils with the opportunity to access Maths simultaneously offering the opportunity for deeper engagement and scope to stretch and challenge pupils conceptual understanding.

- Based on the findings of the Maths Focus group each teacher will complete a Maths Trail each term and provide opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors on a more frequent basis.