An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation

Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St. John's National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Logboy Tulrahan Claremorris County Mayo
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	15539I

Date of inspection: 10-05-2018

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agus Scileanna
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WHAT IS A CURRICULUM EVALUATION?

Curriculum Evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999). 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(s) 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 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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

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.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	10-05-2018
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

St. John's National School, Logboy, is a rural co-educational school, situated seven kilometres south of Ballyhaunis in County Mayo. The school has two mainstream classroom teachers and one full-time support teacher. It also has a part-time visiting support teacher. At the time of the evaluation there were thirty-eight pupils enrolled. Enrolments have been declining in recent years. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. It participates in the School Support Programme of *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools* (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Pupils' learning in Mathematics is of a high standard overall.
- Pupils enjoy good quality learning experiences; there is scope for improvement in the opportunities provided to them to justify their mathematical reasoning.
- The quality of teaching is effective overall; some scope exists to improve support teaching.
- Classroom management is highly effective and pupil behaviour during the evaluation was exemplary.
- The quality of assessment is satisfactory; there is potential to optimise the use of assessment information.
- Whole-school planning is satisfactory; individual teacher planning is not compliant with Department of Education and Skills requirements.
- The school has engaged in school self-evaluation (SSE); broad targets for improvement have been identified but they lack specificity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- More regular opportunities should be provided for the pupils to justify and to explain their thinking processes.
- Early intervention and in-class models of support for Mathematics should be prioritised in whole-school support provision for Mathematics.
- An analysis of strand-specific assessment data should be used to inform the focus of whole-school and individual pupil interventions for Mathematics.
- Teachers' short-term planning should be prepared on a fortnightly basis to comply with Department of Education and Skills' requirements.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning is good overall. Pupils engaged well with the lessons observed but, in some cases, they had limited opportunities to work collaboratively or to discuss their work. It is recommended that all teachers provide further opportunities for pupils to engage in mathematical discussion, involving the reasoning, explaining and justifying of their answers and methods.

Interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers are very respectful and positive. Pupil behaviour during the evaluation was exemplary. From observation of lessons and discussion with pupils, it is evident that they feel positive about their learning in Mathematics and understand that it has relevance both inside and outside the classroom. They enjoy engaging in *Maths Trails* around the school and using their *Maths Eyes.* While most pupils recall number facts, some pupils need further support to achieve fluency in this aspect of the curriculum. Pupils should be enabled to record their written work in Mathematics more carefully and to record all the steps they have taken in the process.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE

The quality of learner experiences is commendable overall. Teachers create supportive learning environments in mathematics-rich classroom settings. Effective use is made of concrete materials to promote understanding and to strengthen learning. Further investment in structured materials for the teaching of number is recommended. A greater effort should be made to connect learning to the pupils' own lives and to the immediate environment. Pupils' experience is used effectively as a starting point in lessons. Increased use by the pupils of information and communications technology (ICT) would be of further benefit in supporting their learning. The recent introduction of *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework,* is a commendable initiative and provides opportunities to extend pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics.

The quality of teachers' practice in Mathematics ranges from satisfactory to very good. All teachers demonstrate skilful management of their multi-grade classes, and different programmes of work are planned for the different grades. However, lesson material and learning activities should be differentiated more effectively to cater for the individual needs of pupils, providing more support or challenge as required by individual pupil needs. Teachers are generally well prepared and a broad range of resources is used in an effective manner to facilitate effective pupil engagement in their learning. However, short-term planning should now be completed on a fortnightly basis in compliance with Department of Education and Skills requirements. Monthly progress reports are completed by all teachers. A review of the content of these reports is advised to enable more efficient use of the data to guide teaching and learning on a whole-school basis.

Support teaching for pupils who present with additional educational needs in numeracy is of a good quality generally but a more collaborative approach to its provision is required. The special educational needs (SEN) policy should be revised to align with the guidelines that accompany *Special Education Teaching Allocation* Circular 13/2017. Whole-school approaches to early intervention and prevention should be implemented. In-class support is currently in use in the senior classroom only. There is a need to provide collaborative station teaching and team-teaching across the school.

The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory. Skills checklists, teacher designed tasks and standardised tests are the primary forms of assessment used. An analysis of strand-specific assessment data should be used to inform the focus of whole-school and individual pupil

interventions for Mathematics. Greater use should be made of the data generated from assessment to inform teaching and learning.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of the school plan is satisfactory. It provides some helpful guidance to teachers on curriculum implementation. Procedures for mathematical operations are clearly outlined and the language requirements of the curriculum are identified. However, it does not reference how pupils' individual needs should be provided for nor does it accurately reflect current school staffing or resources.

The school has identified broad targets for improvement in SSE for Mathematics. The school should now ensure that more specific measurable targets are identified and that progress towards their achievement is monitored and recorded.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

We welcome the findings of the Curriculum Evaluation in Mathematics which affirms the high standard of learning and effective teaching that we have in St. John's N.S.

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 board of management accepts the main findings of the report. It is our intention to continue to implement more regular collaborative team-teaching in the area of Mathematics in both the Senior and Junior classrooms. This will provide more opportunities for the pupils to justify and to explain their thinking processes in Mathematics. Numicon has been purchased and being used in the school. Ready, Set, Go Maths is now being implemented in the infant classes. Teachers will continue to plan collaboratively in order to tailor lessons to meet the needs of all students and class levels. It is our intention to incorporate and embrace these recommendations into our school plan and we will make every effort to ensure effective implementation.

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;