An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Carrig National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Carrig Birr County Tipperary
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	16166A
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	14/05/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	03/09/2025

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 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 school self-evaluation (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

Dates of inspection	13/05/2025 - 14/05/2025
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

Carrig National School is a co-educational primary school located in Carrig, Birr, County Tipperary. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. At the time of the evaluation, there was an enrolment of sixty-two pupils. The school had three mainstream class teachers including the teaching principal, a special class teacher for pupils with autism and a special education teacher (SET) to support pupils with identified needs.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning outcomes in Mathematics was excellent. Pupils were highly motivated, and engaged positively and confidently in their work.
- The overall quality of pupils' learning experiences and teachers' individual practice was very good, with elements of excellent practice also observed.
- The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was very good.

Recommendations

- All teachers should enhance pupils' engagement with Mathematics journals and explore the possibility of using a digital format tailored to the skills and abilities of their pupils.
- To further develop the pupils' communication skills in Mathematics, all teachers should provide their pupils with opportunities to engage with the reasoning of others and, through active listening, build upon the ideas of others.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning was excellent. Almost all pupils demonstrated an enjoyment of Mathematics and engaged enthusiastically in their learning. Pupils saw Mathematics as useful, engaging and motivating, and had the opportunity to share their mathematical ideas with their peers. They were confident in applying mathematical processes to real-life contexts. The pupils who participated in the focus group spoke highly of the impact this has on their overall enjoyment of the subject. All pupils completed a range of cognitively challenging tasks in the lessons observed.

Pupils recalled and applied their prior learning effectively, and they made meaningful connections across all strands of the Mathematics curriculum, as well as connections with other curricular areas. Commendably, they approached problem-solving tasks with curiosity and perseverance, and they implemented a range of strategies to arrive at solutions.

Almost all pupils used mathematical language confidently with accuracy and fluency, and they communicated their thinking with clarity. Their ability to reason, justify and explain their strategies was well developed across all class levels.

During interactions with the pupils, they shared their knowledge of *Shape and Space* and *Number* in particular. In lessons observed, all pupils showed very high levels of understanding in the strands *Number* and *Measures.* Pupils in the junior classes successfully used a range of counting strategies. Their reasoning skills were well developed, and they confidently applied their knowledge to solve a variety of problems.

Pupils in the class for pupil with autism, as well as those in the middle and senior classes, showed a highly commendable understanding of *Measures.* Pupils explored capacity in a manner appropriate to their stage of development. Other pupils explored the concept of time and applied their knowledge to engage in real-life scenarios. These pupils also applied formulae in meaningful ways to solve problems efficiently. They communicated their reasoning very effectively.

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

Pupils' learning experiences were of a very high standard. In all of the lessons observed, the pupils engaged purposefully in active, playful and meaningful mathematical activities that addressed their individual learning needs. These lessons were enriched using a wide variety of resources, which the pupils readily accessed in their classrooms. Pupils had regular opportunities to work collaboratively, to solve problems, and to make choices and decisions in relation to their learning.

All pupils were encouraged to engage in Maths Talk, a concept whereby pupils' thinking, strategies and ideas were shared with the class. To further develop the pupils' communication skills in Mathematics, all teachers should provide their pupils with opportunities to engage with the reasoning of others, to agree or disagree with another's approach, and through active listening, build upon the ideas of others.

Mathematics was effectively integrated with other curricular areas and extended to real-life contexts. Pupils who participated in the focus group described a variety of outdoor learning experiences, across a range of strands, which they engaged in during Mathematics lessons. Furthermore, they spoke positively of the use of various mathematical games and trails that further deepened their understanding and enjoyment of the subject. The school had created an Active Flag route in the school grounds and promoted Mathematics through engagement in initiatives such as Maths Week, Engineers Week and Science Week.

Pupils across all class levels had commenced the use of Mathematics journals with varying degrees of success. Whole-school approaches to the use of Mathematics journals should be considered by all staff. Given the recent enhancement to the digital infrastructure in the school, it would be worthwhile now for all teachers to explore the possibility of enabling pupils to use digital versions of these journals.

Assessment of Mathematics was of a very good quality. Teachers used an array of assessment strategies to monitor pupils' progress and attainment in the subject. Assessment practices included standardised testing, class tests, teacher observations and teacher-pupil conferencing. Where highly effective practice was noted, pupils assessed their own work. Notwithstanding the assessment practices currently used in the school, all teachers should provide pupils with regular, meaningful opportunities for self-assessment, as well as peer-assessment, during lessons in Mathematics. This should contribute to a strong sense of ownership of, and responsibility for, their 03/09/2025DSlearning.

Teachers in all settings displayed a high level of competence in multi-grade teaching and used the learning outcomes of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* very effectively to create a range of cognitively challenging tasks. The interests, needs and abilities of the pupils were considered by all teachers in their preparation for teaching and learning. Lessons were grounded in experiences particular to the pupils and to their locality. Teachers used a variety of questions to deepen pupils' mathematical thinking and to differentiate learning. They provided playful approaches across all settings, contributing to high levels of engagement.

Classrooms featured high-quality displays in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional format. Word banks particular to the topic were created in some classrooms. All teachers should ensure that a record of the vocabulary for each topic explored in Mathematics is available in a way that is easily accessible for pupils.

The school adopted a fluid and flexible approach when supporting pupils with additional learning needs across the school year. Support was provided primarily through an in-class support model. To optimise the potential of this model of support, teachers should model high-quality Maths Talk, critical thinking, and reflection to develop pupils' skills in these areas. In the special class for pupils with autism, the work of the special needs assistants (SNAs) contributed positively to the inclusion, access and participation of all pupils.

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

The quality of school planning, including SSE, was highly commendable in progressing pupils' learning. The principal promoted a strong culture of improvement, collaboration and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment. Staff collaboration was a strong feature of planning, with teachers sharing insights and learning from professional learning events to enhance their teaching approaches.

The school's SSE process was well developed and commendably included both pupils' and parents' opinions in the identification of targets. Targets were created to enhance the wellbeing of all through the development of a community spirit across all aspects of school life.

An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

For the pupils of Carrig National School about their learning in Mathematics

Dates of inspection: 13/05/25 - 14/05/2025

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.

What did the inspector do during the visit?

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:

- Almost all of the pupils enjoyed learning Mathematics and their work was excellent. They used Maths to solve real-life problems and could explain their thinking clearly.
- Teachers used lots of different activities to help the pupils learn. Outdoor activities were regularly used to make learning fun.

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

- Pupils could try using tablets or computers to make their own digital Maths journals. This should be a fun way to show what they are learning.
- When pupils talk about Maths, they should have the chance to listen more to others' ideas, say if they agree or disagree, and explain why.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to 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 of Carrig N.S. is delighted with the excellent evaluation received in relation to the teaching and learning of Mathematics in our school. We are pleased that the inspection recognised the overall learning outcomes in mathematics as excellent. The emphasis on experiential active learning, problem-solving, inclusion of pupil voice and differentiated instruction has clearly had a significant impact on pupil engagement and attainment as students approach problem solving with curiosity and perseverance.

We would like to acknowledge the high level of competence of all teachers as highlighted in the report, the wonderful fluid approach when supporting students with additional learning needs and the strong carefully crafted culture of improvement, collaboration and creativity. The Board of Management is delighted that teachers skillfully differentiate learning activities and use a range of inclusive strategies to ensure that the needs and abilities of all students are considered and supported.

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 welcomes the suggestion that all teachers should enhance pupils' engagement with Mathematics journals and explore the possibility of using a digital format tailored to the skills and abilities of their pupils. The Board will update IT equipment in classrooms over the next 2 years to facilitate e-journals for students. Students and teachers will be enabled to upload photos of their learning journals to new interactive whiteboards, insert drawings or number sentences using stylus tools, annotate work and explain their problem solving and reasoning to others. Peers can then view and comment constructively. The school will trial using E-journals with students as part of teacher conferences/assessments to track progress and celebrate mathematical thinking.

To further develop pupils' communication skills in Mathematics, all teachers will aim to provide their pupils with opportunities to engage with the reasoning of others through active listening. Paired work and group work will continue to be facilitated through STEM activities where students give feedback on their approaches and present their learning to the class interactively.

Pupils will be encouraged to write out or draw their solutions on posters or sheets and walk around the classroom to view others' work. Students will be encouraged to reflect and give feedback by leaving sticky notes with comments, observations or questions.

Carrig N.S. will continue to embed Maths Talks where after solving a problem, students can be paired to explain their method to a partner using sentence starters like , 'I noticed that... '; or ,'I chose' this strategy because...'; 'I liked _____ approach'. This will help students clarify thinking and highlights alternative approaches to problem solving.

Weekly 'walk through's at assemblies will enhance opportunities for pupil voice where students will discuss their learning from the week using Maths Talk. This will further encourage active listening and peer reflection.

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