An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Mathematics
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Killina Presentation Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Rahan Tullamore Co Offaly
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	65630B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	12/03/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	21/05/2025

What is a subject inspection?

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. 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. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

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 subject inspection 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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 students.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	11 and 12 March 2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with the principal, both deputy principals and key staff • Interaction with students, including focus groups	• Observation of teaching and learning during nine lessons consisting of eight single periods and one double period. Team-teaching also featured during a single period lesson. • Examination of students' work • Feedback to the principal, deputy principals and subject teachers

School context

Killina Presentation Secondary School is a co-educational, voluntary school under the trusteeship of Catholic Education, an Irish Schools' Trust. The school has a current enrolment of 715 students and offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE), and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good overall.
- Teachers created positive learning environments where student participation was consistently affirmed and encouraged.
- There was a range of mostly very effective learning experiences, with some further scope to include collaborative opportunities for students.
- The quality of assessment was good overall. The effectiveness of formative assessment and feedback approaches to support and progress learning varied, with capacity for further development.
- Overall, the quality of whole-school support and provision for the subject were very good. Students in TY were banded and this should be addressed.
- The quality of planning and preparation was very good; with further development of schemes of work required.

Recommendations

- Teachers should increase opportunities for students to participate in purposeful and structured pair and group work to further develop their critical thinking and peer learning skills.
- Formative assessment strategies should be used more often by teachers in all lessons and also through written feedback on key pieces of work.
- The mathematics department should return to its previous practice of placing students in mixed ability classes during TY.
- To ensure that learning for each year group is incrementally planned according to units of learning, the mathematics department should review schemes of work.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good overall.
- Students and teachers shared a positive classroom atmosphere where teachers offered encouragement and students felt confident asking and answering questions.
- All classrooms visited presented an attractive and stimulating learning environment including the display of students' work.
- All teachers shared learning intentions with students in the lessons observed. This communication was particularly effective in lessons where teachers elicited students' prior knowledge to phrase the learning intentions using students' explanations.
- In a few lessons observed, teachers referred to success criteria in keeping with the school's engagement with the process of school self-evaluation (SSE). This very effective practice enables students to take greater ownership of their learning by focusing on mathematical approaches and the attainment standards required. The use of success criteria is a practice that could be further embedded into all classroom practice.
- In most lessons observed, teachers placed an emphasis on mathematical keywords and notation. Very effective practice fostered dialogue using subject specific language to frame questions and answers. This appropriate use of mathematical literacy in the form of keywords and notation supported students' conceptual exploration of Mathematics.
- In a significant minority of lessons, learning experiences featured a highly successful mixture of differentiation, student autonomy and mathematical skill development. In a trigonometry lesson, for instance, students were asked to identify procedural errors and then provide their own fully worked solutions. This task very effectively balanced differentiation, procedural fluency and critical thinking.
- Teachers used information and communications technology (ICT) to present visual representations of mathematical concepts, in most lessons observed. This methodological approach is very effective because multiple modes of representation enabled students to engage with the lesson content in different ways, supporting students' understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Students in all lessons observed, had opportunities to discuss their work with individuals seated next to them. In a small number of lessons, teachers engaged students in structured and purposeful pair and group work. This very effective practice facilitated the development of peer learning skills. Teachers should increase students' opportunities to engage in structured and purposeful pair and group work.
- The student focus group reported that learning experiences ranged from narrow to broad sets of approaches. They particularly enjoyed lessons that included active and visual learning methodologies, ICT and the application to real-life examples.
- The quality of assessment was good overall.
- All teachers used questioning as their main methodology to assess students' understanding and progress. There was, however, an over-reliance on global and lower-order questioning, which resulted in limited assessment of all students' understanding and progress. While subject department planning documentation provided for a focus on how formative assessment could be used and featured examples of all student response strategies, this practice was not observed in lessons. It is therefore recommended that mathematics teachers further develop their use of formative assessment during lessons.
- In all lessons observed, teachers encouraged students to raise queries concerning the content and actively circulated the classroom to monitor students' progress as they worked on assigned tasks, providing one-to-one guidance where necessary. This is very good practice.
- Teachers regularly assigned homework and corrected it in class. The practice of providing formative feedback on students' work varied and this should be addressed to

ensure that students receive written guidance towards improvement on key pieces of work.
- It is highly commendable that the mathematics department encouraged all students to take part in extra-curricular events promoting Mathematics including the opportunity to participate in national competitions.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- Overall, the quality of subject provision and whole-school support in Mathematics was very good.
- The senior management team facilitated access for all students to study the subject, including the option for leaving certificate applied students to study Mathematics within leaving certificate classes. Applied Mathematics had also been introduced as an additional subject.
- There was very good communication between the special educational needs (SEN) team and the mathematics department to co-ordinate and support engagement with Mathematics for students with additional needs. Several effective approaches were used including team-teaching in classes where there was most need.
- Effective concurrent timetabling was in place for year groups allowing for the placement of students into level-specific classes best suited to their abilities. This placement occurred at the beginning of second year and at the beginning of fifth year.
- Banding of students had recently been introduced into the optional Transition Year programme (TY). It is recommended that the mathematics department returns to its previous practice of placing students in mixed-ability classes during TY.
- Provision of resources for teaching and learning was very good. All classrooms were equipped with data projectors, six laptop trollies were also available to teachers, in addition to two dedicated computer classrooms. All teachers and students were provided with access to the school's digital platform.
- The support from the senior management team for teacher professional learning was very good. Attendance of appropriate professional learning events was encouraged and facilitated. Recent whole-school professional learning focused on team-teaching and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

3. Planning and preparation

- Overall the quality of planning and preparation in the mathematics department was very good.
- The role of subject co-ordinator had just been reappointed. It is good practice to rotate this role between teachers, as this allows for the development of organisational and leadership capacities within the department.
- Members of the mathematics department worked well as a collaborative team. All planning documents were stored electronically; this included shared learning resources.
- Formal and informal subject department meetings provided opportunities to discuss teaching, learning and assessment arrangements and organisational matters. Minutes of formal meetings were recorded and shared digitally.
- The mathematics department's plan included schemes of work constructed from textbook chapters rather than from units of learning that integrate related topics across strands. It is recommended that the mathematics department review these schemes of work to ensure that learning for each year group is incrementally planned according to units of learning.
- Very commendably, the mathematics department plan committed to incorporating project work as part of the TY learning portfolio. This mode of learning experience aligns

towards the new Transition Year Programme Statement, and is a very significant strength in the mathematics team's planning and practice.

- At senior cycle, ordinary and higher level schemes of work were not aligned, meaning students changing level incurred gaps in content. The mathematics department had correctly identified this as an area for review and this needs to be progressed.
- Teachers administered common assessments where possible. This is very good practice.
- The mathematics department conducted its own analysis of the junior cycle and senior cycle state examination results to inform action planning towards improvement. This highly commendable approach was aligned to whole-school subject department planning practices fostered by the senior leadership team in conjunction with the board of management to exercise greater oversight of state examination attainment.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and both deputy principals at the conclusion of the evaluation.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the students of Killina Presentation Secondary School about their learning in Mathematics
Date of inspection:12/03/2025

What kind of inspection did your school have?

A subject inspection was completed in your school. The inspector observed lessons and spoke with the principal and teachers. The inspector met with a group of students to talk to them about their learning in Mathematics.

What were the main findings of the inspection?

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good and the quality of assessment was good.
- Students enjoyed being active in their learning and when visuals were used to help with understanding.
- There was scope to check in more often during lessons on students' understanding and the progress being made.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in Mathematics?

- Teachers should do more pair and group work so that students have the opportunity to learn from each other.
- Teachers should use strategies that assess all learners' progress throughout the lesson. They also need to agree how they will give students written comments on how to improve their work.
- The mathematics teachers should look at their planning documents to make sure that they create connections between topics.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
Special thanks to the students who participated 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