An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Mathematics
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Doon Co Limerick
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	68121S
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	07/02/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	26/05/2025

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(s) 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	06/02/2025 – 07/02/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including focus group	• Observation of teaching and learning during 7 lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

Scoil Tríonóide Naofa is a co-educational voluntary secondary school operating under the trusteeship of Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). The school offered the Junior Cycle, Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP), an optional Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE). At the time of the evaluation, the school had an enrolment of 523 students.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good.
- The quality of whole school support for the subject was good, and very good in relation to the provision of support for students with identified needs.
- The quality of both individual planning and collaborative planning was good; the department had collated an extensive range of resources to support the teaching of Mathematics and reflected regularly on key aspects of their practice.
- The department had identified trends to be addressed in the uptake and attainment of Mathematics in senior cycle and, combined with reflection on subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings, intended to address these trends in the coming years.

Recommendations

- At the time of the evaluation, subject teachers chose to teach aspects of curriculum content from the sixth-year scheme of work outside regular school hours; in order to ensure equity of access to the subject for all learners, senior management will need to ensure that this practice ceases. Strategies to enhance student experience in the timetabled provision provided for within school hours should be utilised.
- Students' participation in their learning and the development of skills that support formative assessment presented as areas to be developed. The department should collaboratively consider and implement strategies that will provide students of all capabilities with much greater opportunities to interact with their peers to enhance their development as mathematical thinkers and learners.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good.
- Lessons were generally well structured and learning intentions were shared with students. This was usually followed by activation of prior learning and the development of new concepts. In some cases, students' prior knowledge was not

sufficiently activated and the progress of the lesson became overly reliant on teacher input to remind students of previously explored concepts.

- Interactions between students and teachers were positive overall. Questioning by teachers was mostly based on one-to-one interactions, and while questions were rigorous and answers well-explained, it would be worthwhile for teachers to consider how, through the use of collaborative learning strategies, a greater proportion of students could be involved in responding to a greater proportion of the questions. This would establish a more collaborative classroom culture.
- In one very effective lesson, students had the opportunity to engage with concrete materials such as geostrips, dice and cards to design and extend their own patterns. Because of the use of these materials, students of all abilities were able to engage at once with the task, and robust conversation between students around the approaches to finding an extended term in the pattern followed. This use of concrete materials to engage and extend students' learning should be incorporated into regular practice.
- In lessons where concepts were linked to real-world examples students showed greater understanding of the concept and more inquisitive dispositions. This was observed in three lessons related to the development of patterns, logarithmic growth and aspects of measure, perimeter and area. The use of real-world examples to underpin students' understanding of abstract concepts should be more visibly incorporated into units of learning.
- In the majority of lessons, students, while engaged and responsive to assigned tasks, did not have sufficient opportunity to discuss Mathematics in a way that supported the development of skills needed to be a successful mathematical learner. Such skills include hypothesising, justifying and reasoning. Students were relatively quiet in all lessons. Teachers, as a subject department, should consider what effective strategies could be incorporated into practice to improve students' overall learning experience in this regard.
- Good use of digital technology in one lesson facilitated the consolidation of new learning as a collaborative student endeavour. Students in the focus group also praised teachers' use of digital technology and indicated that class notes, videos and other links were available to them when completing independent study.
- Students took notes in the majority of lessons and had mixed feedback on the value of these notes. The department should consider how best to have students value notes as a support for learning, and the role that note-making, rather than note-taking, can play in the development of learning skills. The role and skills of formative assessment, which was limited as seen in the evaluation, should also be considered in the development of independent learning skills.
- There was evidence of some teacher-based classrooms being print-rich environments that supported student learning. This practice should be extended to provide curated learning environments that support students' literacy and independent learning, and act as a focal point for student-created exemplars of work.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support was good. However, at the time of the evaluation, subject teachers chose to teach aspects of curriculum content from the sixth-year scheme of work outside regular school hours. In order to ensure equity of access to Mathematics and quality of experience in the subject for all learners, senior leadership will need to ensure that this practice ceases. To support this transition, strategies to enhance student experience in the timetabled provision within school hours will need to be utilised and developed. Some of these are outlined in this report.
- Careful consideration had gone into tailoring provision for students with identified needs. Team teaching was a key feature of this provision. Where this was seen

working most effectively, both teachers were involved in aspects of delivery of the lesson, with very good modelling of positive interactions. In many cases, the team teacher was a subject specialist which further enhanced provision. Teachers acknowledged the benefit of working with other teachers in this manner as a means of professional development.

- Very effective practice and progress was seen in a small group lesson where students had choice in the type of task they undertook. Consideration needed to be given as to how these students can then be meaningfully incorporated into mainstream lessons in a way that best supports their identified needs.
- Teachers of students who undertook L2LPs had access to online checklists to support individual student assessment. Teachers involved in this provision were also encouraged to facilitate cross-curricular tasks that addressed multiple priority learning units in a shared approach and had been successful in this area to date. This was very good practice.
- Whole-school numeracy strategies were in place as part of the school self-evaluation (SSE) process. These strategies included those enacted by the Maths department to promote the subject such as Maths Ninjas, Chess Club and a Games Club for first years. Other long-standing strategies related to numeracy practices in SSE should be reviewed and adjusted in light of the content of this report.
- Senior leadership ensured trends and patterns in Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate assessments and examinations were analysed each year, which also supported individual academic tracking.

3. Planning and preparation

- The quality of both individual planning and collaborative planning was good.
- An extensive subject department plan was available which covered many subject-specific and whole-school areas. The plan documented aspects that related to the school's focus on wellbeing, while schemes of work included areas related to collaborative teaching techniques and the articulation of a range of assessment practices. There is a need now to discuss how aspects of teaching for wellbeing and aspects of formative assessment articulated in the plan can be effectively incorporated into classroom practice to ensure the aims of the plan are a lived experience for students.
- It was evident that the department had collaborated on collating an extensive range of resources to support the teaching of Mathematics and used common assessments to aid identification of needs, all of which was good practice.
- It was very positive that some teachers had already significantly upskilled in the area of digital technologies and members of the department intended to develop their use of this across the subject department.
- In order to ensure the consistent provision of very good mathematical experiences, it is timely now for the department to collaboratively articulate and plan for the type of experience they would like all students to have in relation to Mathematics. This articulation and implementation should focus on developing students as mathematical learners as they move throughout the school. In carrying this out, the department should consider and implement strategies that will provide students of all capabilities with much greater opportunity to interact with their peers to enhance their development as mathematical thinkers. These strategies should include support for the development of students' subject-specific and assessment-based language capabilities so students can actively reflect on and further their progress independently of teacher input.
- The subject department had identified trends to be addressed to increase the uptake and attainment in higher-level Mathematics, especially in senior cycle. This, combined with its consideration of the quality of classroom-based assessments (CBAs), the outcomes of SLAR meetings, and the department self-review undertaken as part of the SSE process, showed the level of reflection in the department.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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Department of Education

For the students of Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa about their learning in Mathematics

Date of inspection: 06/02/2025 – 07/02/2025

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 overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good. The school provides very good quality extra support for students when they need it.
- Teachers planned good lessons by themselves and together. They had collected lots of materials to help teach Maths and often thought about how to improve students' learning.
- Teachers had noticed patterns in how students choose to do higher level Mathematics and they plan to have more students doing higher level Mathematics in the next few years.

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

- Students need to have more opportunities to take part in their learning by talking about and discussing Mathematics in lessons.
- Because Mathematics cannot be timetabled outside school hours, teachers will have to think about what happens in senior cycle classes so students can still have a very good experience in Mathematics.

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