An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Patrick's National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Ballinamuck Co Longford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	19975C
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	22/10/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	18/12/2025

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 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>Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS.
2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of Bí Cineálta, it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it.
2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and students/pupils.
3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
</table>

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

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	20/10/2025 and 22/10/2025
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

St. Patrick's National School is a rural co-educational primary school located in Ballinamuck, Co. Longford. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. At the time of the evaluation, the school had three mainstream class teachers, one full-time support teacher and two part-time support teachers who were based in other local schools. There were sixty-three pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good, and pupils presented as motivated and enthusiastic learners.
- Pupils' learning experiences were very good overall and pupils demonstrated confidence when engaging with tasks.
- The quality of teachers' practice in Mathematics was highly commendable, and a positive Mathematics culture was established across the school.
- The quality of whole-school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) in progressing pupils' learning was very good.

Recommendations

- School leaders and teachers should explore the mathematical concepts in the toolkit for the Primary Mathematics Curriculum (PMC) to ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to stretch and challenge their conceptual understandings of Mathematics.

- Teachers should ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to use digital technologies to investigate, model and communicate mathematical ideas creatively.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics was very good. Pupils presented as enthusiastic, motivated and determined learners. They demonstrated a very good knowledge and competence in the areas of number, shape, data and fractions. They explored, constructed and used a variety of approaches to investigate mathematical concepts.

All pupils had access to a wide range of concrete materials during lessons observed. They were enabled to use these materials in ways that prompted them to consolidate newly acquired mathematical language. Core mathematical vocabulary was displayed in every classroom and pupils were encouraged to use this vocabulary precisely. Most pupils could see the relevance of Mathematics to their own lives and demonstrated good ability to apply their learning to new contexts.

While digital technology was used during some lessons as a tool to support and enhance teaching and learning, the active use of digital technologies by pupils during Mathematics had scope to be further developed. Consideration should be given to exploring how pupils can use digital technology to express their mathematical ideas. Teachers should ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to use digital technologies to investigate, model and communicate mathematical ideas creatively.

During the focus-group discussion, pupils expressed varying levels of enjoyment in their lessons. They especially enjoyed learning through games, activity and the use of concrete materials. They expressed a strong desire for more digital learning during lessons. They enjoyed participating in group work and collaborative learning experiences and made meaningful connections between Mathematics and other subject areas.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences was very good. Teachers created positive, vibrant learning environments and pupils displayed very good listening skills. All interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers were respectful and conducive to pupil wellbeing.

Where practice was best, pupils worked collaboratively in pairs and groups and lessons were enriched by a playful approach to learning and enquiry-based activities. During some lessons, pupils had opportunities to share and justify their thinking, showing peers how they represented their ideas and reached solutions. This good practice should be extended to all settings.

Organised initiatives in STEM education helped pupils connect Mathematics with other curricular areas. Other initiatives such chess competitions and the celebration of Mathematics week was impacting positively on pupils' learning experiences. The school had created an Active Walkway on the school grounds and teachers had adapted this walkway as a Mathematics trail to enhance pupils' outdoor mathematical experiences. Commendably, the school had introduced the use of Mathematics journals in all classes to enable pupils to consolidate and reflect further on their learning.

The quality of teaching was very good. Teachers demonstrated very effective pedagogical knowledge in Mathematics, and it was evident that lessons built incrementally on prior learning. All teachers shared clear learning objectives with pupils to begin each lesson, and lessons were very well structured. Teachers were skilled communicators and employed a range of methodologies such as modelling, explanation and demonstration to good effect. Commendably, all teachers explicitly modelled key mathematical language correctly in the context of the learning activity and used the language consistently throughout the lesson. They encouraged pupils to see the mathematics underpinning everyday situations and this was a strong feature of practice in all settings observed.

Teachers used a broad range of mathematical resources to support pupils' learning. However, in all lessons observed, there was scope for pupils to be challenged further. School leaders and teachers should explore the mathematical concepts in the toolkit for the Primary Mathematics Curriculum (PMC) to ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to stretch and challenge

their conceptual understandings of Mathematics. Teachers displayed and celebrated pupils' own mathematical work. Classroom displays were stimulating, useful and related to lesson topics.

Teachers used a range of assessment approaches to monitor pupils' learning including skilful questioning and engagement with pupils. Each teacher maintained an assessment folder that included anecdotal notes, test results and samples of pupils' work. Teachers' knowledge of their pupils impacted meaningfully on teaching and learning.

While pupils' written work was generally well monitored there was scope for all teachers to provide more feedback for improvement to pupils. In order to increase pupil ownership of their learning, teachers should ensure that feedback in copybooks is formative and delivered consistently. This will further enhance pupils' ability to self-assess and take greater responsibility for their learning.

The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs was good. Special education teachers provided a range of in-class supports to meet the needs of pupils by adjusting content, using concrete materials and providing choices for pupils. There was evidence of very good communication and collaboration between mainstream class teachers and special education teachers. Special education teachers prepared appropriate support plans for all pupils. There was scope for pupils' specific priority learning needs to be more clearly identified in the support plans and to ensure that learning targets for pupils are aligned more closely to these individual priority learning needs.

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

The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was very good. Leadership capably led learning in Mathematics and there were effective processes for collaboration, communication and the sharing of good practice. It was evident in classroom practice that previous school improvement plans had focused on the language of Mathematics and had impacted positively on teaching and learning. School leaders should now update the whole-school plan for Mathematics, informed by the Primary Mathematics Curriculum 2023, to reflect the very effective practice operating in the school and to include the role of technology in pupils' learning.

The current area of focus for SSE is wellbeing and digital learning. Self-evaluation procedures were well established in the school and school leaders and teachers were committed to progressing whole-school priorities for enhancing learning.

An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

For the pupils of St Patricks about their learning in Mathematics
Date of inspection: 22/10/2025

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. An 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:

- Pupils' learning in Mathematics was very good.
- Pupils had opportunities to use many concrete materials during lessons.
- Teachers prepared well for lessons and helped pupils to see Mathematics in everyday situations.

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

- Teachers should make lessons in Mathematics more challenging for pupils.
- Pupils should have further chances to use digital technology to explore Mathematics creatively.

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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

St Patrick's National School welcomes the positive report following the recent curriculum evaluation in Mathematics. We are delighted that the report acknowledged the respectful interactions observed between staff and pupils which are conducive to pupil wellbeing. We are delighted with the quality of teaching and learning experiences acknowledged in the report. We are particularly pleased with how the school is fostering a positive Mathematics culture. The report positively affirms the different options given to children to challenge maths problems through playful experiences, with opportunities afforded for working collaboratively in pairs and in groups where appropriate. The school is very pleased with evidence supporting cross-curricular teaching, opportunities for children to see Maths in the outside world and linking maths to other STEM subjects. We are delighted that the steps taken to improve Mathematical teaching and learning from previous School Improvement Plans have been commended.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Staff met to discuss the findings of the evaluation for Mathematics. School leaders and teachers enrolled for the second series of 'muinin workshops' in November 2025 to upskill as part of their continuous professional development. Teachers are actively collaborating to share resources from the 'muinin workshops' along with other resources they have encountered from previous school closure days, the first series of muinin workshops and by networking with teachers in other schools. A padlet was created from which the teaching staff could easily access the mathematical concepts as well as other resources in the toolkit for the New Primary Mathematics Curriculum. The principal shared a draft of a new Mathematics plan with staff on the staff drive on 10/11/25. This was discussed at a Croke Park meeting on 17/11/25 and is a working document. The Mathematics plan will be edited by teachers and redrafted. The whole-school plan will be informed by the Primary Mathematics Curriculum 2023, to reflect the very effective practice operating in the school. The new Mathematics plan will be shared with parents and the Board of Management for any further considerations before ratification at the end of the 2025/2026 school year.

Teachers are currently experimenting with and piloting different digital technologies and applications to give greater scope for children to investigate, model and communicate mathematical ideas creatively. Appropriate apps on IPADs will be utilised at each class level to enhance teaching and learning. We are also exploring opportunities for peer to peer teaching where appropriate, to include scope for children in older classrooms to scaffold learning in the junior classrooms. The school Mathematics padlet will be updated and used as a resource bank for children to incorporate digital technologies into their learning where appropriate. This padlet will be shared with parents through our school's communication platform and school website to enhance home school links.