An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Sn Deaghan O Ceallaigh
Seoladh na scoile/School address	The Batteries Athlone Co. Westmeath
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	16639R
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	22/10/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	10/12/2025

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 inspectors 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	21/10/2025
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

Sn Deaghan O Ceallaigh is a boys' primary school located in Athlone, County Westmeath. The school caters for pupils from second to sixth class and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin. It participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan, which provides additional supports to promote equity and inclusion in education. At the time of the evaluation, there were seventy-seven pupils enrolled. The school had five mainstream class teachers and four special education teachers, including the teaching principal.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes was very good. Pupils demonstrated a strong understanding of key mathematical concepts and applied their learning effectively in practical and written contexts.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences was very good. Pupils engaged purposefully in active and hands-on tasks.
- The quality of teaching was very good. Lessons were purposeful, well structured, and enriched by clear modelling.
- The quality of assessment was good. Teachers gathered a broad range of assessment information through standardised tests, classroom-based assessments, and pupil self-reflections.
- Whole-school planning and engagement in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process were highly commendable.

Recommendations

- Teachers should provide pupils with greater cognitive challenge through open and investigative mathematical tasks that promote reasoning, flexibility, and creativity.
- To strengthen the impact of support for pupils with additional needs, teacher should make greater use of diagnostic and formative assessment to develop programmes of learning which are underpinned by clear, measurable targets.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning outcomes in Mathematics was very good. Across the school, pupils demonstrated a strong understanding of key mathematical concepts and achieved very well in *Number, Measures, Data, Algebra* and *Shape and space*. They reasoned confidently, recognised relationships across topics, and applied strategies effectively in both practical and written contexts. Pupils used mathematical language with accuracy and clarity, expressing their ideas using appropriate vocabulary and representations. Almost all pupils showed fluency in applying known facts and procedures and competently explained how they reached solutions when questioned.

During focus group discussions, pupils described mathematics as enjoyable and engaging. They spoke positively about how their teachers explained new concepts clearly and made learning fun. Pupils said they enjoyed using digital technologies, mathematics resources, active learning tasks, and coding activities. They expressed a desire for more opportunities for hands-on learning, challenge, and pair work, noting that these approaches helped them to remember what they learned.

While pupils responded very well to purposeful and structured tasks, there was scope for them to engage more frequently in open-ended and challenging mathematical activities that required deeper reasoning, independent decision-making, and creativity. Teachers should provide further challenge through open and investigative mathematical tasks that promote reasoning, flexibility, and creativity. By engaging regularly in such experiences, pupils would move more fluently between concrete materials, visual models, and symbolic representations to construct and communicate mathematical meaning.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics was very good. Classrooms were calm, respectful, and purposeful places of learning. Pupils engaged enthusiastically in warm-up activities and participated actively in practical and station-based tasks, using materials such as counters, lollipop sticks, and protractors to explore ideas and represent their thinking. The learning environment was stimulating and well organised, with displays that consolidated key concepts and mathematical language.

In the most effective lessons, pupils engaged in purposeful mathematical talk comparing strategies and evaluating solutions together. They listened attentively to their peers and built positively on one another's ideas, which promoted confidence and accuracy in using mathematical language. In many lessons, interaction was guided mainly by the teacher, and pupils had fewer opportunities to articulate their thinking collectively. Providing more regular opportunities for pupils to discuss and explain their thinking together would strengthen reasoning and deepen understanding.

Pupils also benefited from additional opportunities that enhanced their experience of mathematics. They engaged enthusiastically in parent-involved mathematics sessions, mathematics trails, and whole-school active-learning initiatives that linked mathematics with movement and everyday contexts. These activities helped pupils connect mathematics with everyday life and promoted positive attitudes, curiosity, and enjoyment of the subject. Pupils also participated in coding and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) activities that fostered problem-solving, logical reasoning, and creativity. Digital technology was used effectively to support engagement and consolidation, primarily through drill-and-practice

activities. There was scope for pupils to use digital technology more creatively as a tool for exploration, investigation, and the presentation of their mathematical thinking.

The quality of teachers' practice was very good. Lessons were purposeful, well structured, and clearly focused on the intended learning. Teachers introduced and consolidated mathematical language effectively and modelled concepts using a range of visual and digital tools. Questioning was used skilfully to elicit understanding and to encourage pupils to explain their thinking. Teachers provided pupils with appropriate mathematical tools and materials that supported them to explore, represent, and record their ideas confidently. Teachers shared new professional learning on an ongoing basis to enrich their collective practice. They designed mathematics trails and active learning tasks that linked classroom learning with real-life contexts and promoted pupils' understanding of the relevance of mathematics in everyday life.

Assessment practices supported learning effectively. Teachers gathered a broad range of assessment information through standardised tests, classroom-based assessments, and pupil self-reflections. This information was also used to guide support teaching and interventions. In support settings, teachers made effective use of assessment information to plan calm, language-rich learning environments where pupils were encouraged to reason, discuss their thinking, and use concrete and visual materials to support understanding. While assessment systems were well established, teachers should make greater use of diagnostic and formative assessment information to inform programmes of learning that are underpinned by clear, measurable targets. Strengthening the link between assessment and support planning would help to ensure that additional teaching is tailored to meeting the priority learning needs of pupils.

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

The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was highly commendable. The school enhanced learning through systematic consultation, evidence gathering, analysis, and targeted action planning. Leaders and teachers demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement and engaged collaboratively in reviewing practice and sharing effective approaches. The whole-school plan for Mathematics reflected the school's collegial ethos and professional learning culture and provided clear guidance for teaching and learning. Teachers were well supported to implement agreed improvements, and professional dialogue during staff meetings promoted a shared understanding of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum.* As a next step, the plan could provide additional guidance on the use of mathematics journals to support pupils' reflection and continuity in learning. The school's collaborative culture provides a strong foundation for embedding the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* further as part of its ongoing cycle of improvement.

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Department of Education and Youth

For the pupils of Sn Deaghan O Ceallaigh about their learning in Mathematics

Date of inspection: 21/10/2025

Introduction

Your school had an inspection of Mathematics recently. This page for pupils describes what the inspectors found and gives ideas about what the school should do to make learning better.

What did the inspectors do during the visit?

The inspectors 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 inspectors find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Learning was very good. Pupils enjoyed solving problems and using maths in real-life situations.
- Teaching was very good. Teachers explained new ideas clearly and used materials and digital tools to help pupils understand.
- Teachers checked how well pupils were learning through questions, activities, and tests.

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

- Teachers should give pupils more opportunities to try challenging and creative maths activities that help them to think deeply, solve problems in different ways, and use what they know in real-life situations.
- To make sure all pupils get the right level of support in their learning, teachers should use what they find out from tests, activities, and classroom work to help everyone make their best progress in Maths.

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