

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Curriculum Evaluation**  
**Mathematics**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Midleton Convent N S (Scoil Bhríde)
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Midleton Co. Cork
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	00512D

**Date of inspection: 13-11-2019**



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agus Scileanna**  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **WHAT IS A CURRICULUM EVALUATION?**

Curriculum Evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999). 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
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learner 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.

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.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

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.

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

## Curriculum Evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	13-11-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Pupil focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Midleton Convent National School, also known as Scoil Bhríde, is a vertical primary school that caters for girls from infants to sixth class and for boys from junior infants to senior infants in the town of Midleton, Co. Cork. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Diocese of Cloyne. There are nineteen mainstream classes, nine full-time special education posts and one part-time support teacher. In addition, the school has one pre-school class and three special classes for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). There are 448 pupils enrolled and the attendance of most pupils is good.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good.
- A highly commendable focus on the explicit teaching and use of maths language was observed consistently throughout the school and this greatly enhances the pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Overall, the learning experiences provided for pupils in Mathematics are of a very high quality.
- The quality of teaching is very good with some exemplary practices observed.
- The quality of assessment is good with some very good practices in assessment for learning observed in some classes; potential exists to extend the use of diagnostic testing for pupils with additional learning needs.
- The quality of school planning and SSE is very good.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Diagnostic assessments should be used more extensively in support settings to identify specific pupil needs in Mathematics and to inform planning and implementation of support interventions.

### DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics, including pupils with special educational needs, is very good. During the evaluation, pupils were observed to enjoy their learning greatly

and were highly motivated to learn. There is clear evidence of progression in the learning outcomes of the pupils as they move from class to class. Their knowledge, skills and understanding across all strand areas reflect the appropriate learning objectives as set out in the Primary School Curriculum. Consequently, pupils are enabled to use this knowledge and understanding competently and confidently when engaging in a very good range of active learning experiences. Links between current learning in Mathematics and the pupils' real-life experience are consistently established.

Early mathematical activities are a very effective feature of pupils' learning experiences, and number concepts and operations are very well developed across the school. While pupils are appropriately challenged in their learning and regularly engage in problem-solving activities, further exposure to more open-ended problem solving and enquiry-based experiences would enhance their learning in some classes.

During a focus-group interview with pupils, they stated that their teachers make learning in Mathematics fun and relevant through the use of concrete materials, active approaches, games and some use of maths trails.

## **2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE**

Overall, the learning experiences provided for all pupils in Mathematics are of a very high quality. The lessons observed were very well structured, stimulating and interesting. Learning environments support and celebrate pupils' mathematics learning very effectively. Pupils are actively and meaningfully engaged in their learning and display very positive attitudes to Mathematics. Pupils have opportunities to apply their learning to a variety of relevant real-life situations, and Mathematics is integrated through the work in other curricular areas, most notably in Science and the Visual Arts.

The quality of teaching is very good with some exemplary practice observed. Teachers select and use teaching approaches and methodologies appropriate to the learning intentions and to the pupils' learning needs with very good emphasis on collaborative learning approaches. A range of activities, including initiatives in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), support pupils' learning in Mathematics and help to foster positive attitudes. A highly commendable focus on the explicit teaching and use of maths language was observed consistently throughout the school and this greatly enhances the pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding. Pupils participate in a wide selection of games and effective use is made of a variety of approaches based on programmes such as *Ready Set Go Maths* and *Mata sa Rang*. A range of resources, including carefully planned use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in many classes, is used purposefully and appropriately.

Support for pupils with special educational needs is provided through a blend of both in-class support and withdrawal. Highly commendable team teaching approaches were observed in many classes, including very effective teaching methodologies and use of ICT in classes for pupils with an ASD. Where best practice was observed, comprehensive, evidence-based learning plans were aligned with specific and measurable targets; this should be extended across the school. Teachers prepare worthwhile and engaging activities during withdrawal sessions.

Teachers' collective practice is a significant strength in the school. They engage in regular and focused professional development which is systematically shared, resulting in the collective display of high levels of expertise.

Overall, the quality of assessment is good. A very good range of assessment data is gathered in all classes. The very good practices in assessment for learning such as digital portfolios along with opportunities for pupil self-reflection and use of learning logs should be extended. The more extensive use of diagnostic assessment is recommended in order to identify specific pupil needs and to inform planning and implementation of support interventions.

Teachers' individual planning is of a very good quality in general, and in nearly all settings, includes provision for the teaching of key mathematical language along with appropriate differentiation for the range of learning needs.

Provision for Mathematics in the special classes is of a high quality. Very positive and supportive teaching interactions were observed.

### **3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS' LEARNING**

The quality of school planning and SSE is very good.

The recently updated whole-school plan for Mathematics informs and reflects many of the practices in the school. While much of this is implemented effectively throughout the school, this could be enhanced further through ongoing support and monitoring of implementation by a member of the in-school leadership team. Under the highly effective leadership of the principal, the school's engagement in the school self-evaluation process is impacting very positively on pupil learning.

## 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	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <b>outstanding</b> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board appreciates the report and the affirmation of Scoil Bhríde's work in the area of Mathematics. The board notes with satisfaction the inspectors' many positive comments:

"Overall the learning experiences provided for all pupils in Mathematics are of a very high quality and the pupils are actively and meaningfully engaged in their learning and display very positive attitudes towards Mathematics... '

### **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 is committed to continuing to support the staff in sourcing and using more diagnostic tests in Mathematics.