An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills  

Curriculum Evaluation  
Mathematics  

REPORT  

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Naoimh Éanna</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Killanny  
Carrickmacross  
Co Monaghan |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 05501A |

Date of inspection: 18-01-2019
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 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

Date of inspection: 18-01-2019

Inspection activities undertaken:

- Discussion with principal and teachers
- Review of relevant documents
- Pupil focus-group interview
- Observation of teaching and learning
- Review of pupils’ work
- Interaction with pupils
- Post-inspection feedback meeting with principal and in-school management team

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Éanna is a co-educational school located in Killanny in Co. Monaghan and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Clogher. There are 200 pupils enrolled and they are distributed across eight single-class groupings from junior infants to sixth class. The teaching staff consists of one administrative principal, eight mainstream teachers, two full-time and one part-time special education teachers.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning is very good with their estimation skills and number sense being particularly worthy of note.
- The range of learning experiences provided for pupils is very good overall; opportunities to use mathematics on a cross-curricular basis and in digital learning contexts have not yet been fully developed.
- The school is well equipped with an extensive range of resources and displays that are used regularly and purposively to support teaching and learning in Mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is very good; in a very small number of instances, support for pupils experiencing difficulties with Mathematics could be more closely aligned to their prioritised needs.
- The overall effectiveness of whole-school planning and school self-evaluation is commendable; monitoring the impact of school improvement strategies requires further attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should extend the range of pupils’ learning experiences in Mathematics to include increased opportunities for pupils to use mathematics on a cross-curricular basis and in digital learning contexts; engagement with Mathematics as part of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives will assist in this regard.
- Teachers should ensure that support programmes are sufficiently aligned to pupils’ learning needs in Mathematics; greater use of diagnostic assessment will support the identification and prioritisation of pupils’ learning needs and help to determine the balance of supplementary support which they avail of through in-class support and/or by withdrawal.
- The in-school management team is advised to delineate more clearly the roles and responsibilities for each specific post-holder with a view to enhancing the monitoring of school improvement initiatives and their impact on pupils’ learning.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The overall quality of pupils’ learning is very good. They demonstrate very positive learning dispositions towards Mathematics and recognise its importance for every-day living. During the focus group discussion with pupils, they articulated clearly the benefits that they associate with working with concrete manipulatives and games to progress their learning in Mathematics. Pupils’ engagement in lessons observed during inspection was notable, and in particular their capacity to work collaboratively in small groups. Pupils can discuss their written work and demonstrate a keen understanding of the reasoning and strategies that underpin the various exercises. Pupils show a confident sense of number in all classes appropriate to their age and stage of development. They complete oral and written computational tasks accurately. Pupils’ mathematical skills are well-developed with estimation skills being particularly worthy of note. Pupils’ learning outcomes in the standardised assessment tests are very positive showing incremental progress across the broad range of strands that are encompassed within the Mathematics curriculum.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The quality of pupils’ learning experiences is very good. Pupils have ample opportunities to be actively involved in their learning and to use concrete manipulatives to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils would benefit from additional opportunities to engage in digital learning experiences that would allow them to apply or extend their mathematical knowledge and skills. Pupils in infant classes engage regularly in play-based, integrated learning that promote and facilitate the development of early mathematical concepts and skills. While pupils in all classes are provided with regular opportunities to enjoy Maths trails in outdoor and indoor learning environments, there remains opportunity to extend their experience of using Mathematics across other curricular areas and in particular, Scientific, Environmental and Social Education. (SESE)

Overall, teaching is of a very good standard with teacher/pupil interactions being of a consistently high standard in all settings. Teachers use formative feedback and mathematical language very skilfully to consolidate and extend pupils’ learning. They demonstrate considerable pedagogical knowledge as they structure lessons, small-group discussions and interactions with individual pupils to elicit and deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. Teachers prepare and use a wide range of resources and displays to enrich pupils’ learning in Mathematics. Teachers’ individual practice is informed by collaborative agreement on school improvement priorities including a whole-school emphasis on the development of problem-solving skills. In most instances, teachers differentiate their teaching appropriately to meet pupils’ varying needs and to ensure pupils are sufficiently challenged.

Considerable care and attention is given to pupils who are experiencing difficulty with Mathematics. Teachers implement the Continuum of Support with most supplementary support being provided for pupils using the in-class support model. While very effective team-teaching was observed during the inspection, it was noted that in a small number of instances, pupils’ support programmes could be more closely aligned to their learning needs in Mathematics. Greater use of diagnostic assessment would support the prioritisation of these needs and inform the decision-making process regarding the nature of the supplementary support which would be most suitable.

The overall quality of assessment is high. Teachers monitor carefully pupils’ engagement in learning activities along with ongoing review of their learning achievements in written work and teacher-
designed tests and tasks. Teachers demonstrate a keen awareness of the need to facilitate and support pupil-led assessment with elements of pupil self-assessment and conferencing well-established in a number of instances. An analysis of whole-school test results is undertaken to monitor pupils’ incremental progress and also to monitor achievements across the strands of the mathematics curriculum. This information is used purposefully to address any underperformances noted and has resulted in additional attention being directed towards specific classes or strands.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING
The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils’ learning is commendable. A culture of professional collaboration has been carefully nurtured and it is evident that the school staff has high expectations in relation to the teaching and learning of Mathematics. Individual and collective practices reflects a strong focus on optimising pupils’ learning and progress.

The whole-school plan for Mathematics was reviewed in 2012 and the content is clearly delineated to illustrate an incremental, whole-school approach to the promotion of mathematical language. Consistency of teaching approaches in relation to a range of mathematical procedures is also an integral element of the whole-school plan that is used to inform teachers’ individual practices. The principal reports that the staff plans to revisit the whole-school plan for Mathematics in the near future in conjunction with the introduction of the new Mathematics curriculum.

During the school year 2013/2014, the staff liaised with the pupils and parents as part of the school self-evaluation process to determine the improvement priorities in relation to Numeracy. A number of improvement priorities were identified for teachers, including greater use of resources and methods that support activity-based learning. It is evident that these improvement strategies were implemented and have contributed to ongoing developments in teaching and learning. The staff and the in-school management team each meet weekly to discuss their professional activities and acknowledge that formal review of the SSE targets has yet to be undertaken. The in-school management team is advised to delineate more clearly the roles and responsibilities for each specific post-holder with a view to enhancing the monitoring of school improvement initiatives and their impact on pupils’ learning.
Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management
Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

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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 of Management and Staff of Scoil Naoimh Eanna welcomed the findings of our recent Maths inspection. We have begun to address the recommendations therein. It was a very positive learning experience for all.

We look forward to further enhancing the teaching and learning of Maths in our school.
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.

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<td>Very Good</td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong> 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 outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>Good</td>
<td><strong>Good</strong> 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 very good standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<td>Weak</td>
<td><strong>Weak</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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