An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Burriscarra National School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Carnacon, Ballyglass  Claremorris County Mayo</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>05756K</td>
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Date of inspection: 21-03-2019
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 inspector 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

Date of inspection  21-03-2019
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
Burriscarra National School is a co-educational primary school located in the village of Carnacon, around eighteen kilometres from Claremorris, County Mayo. This school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam and has two mainstream teachers, including a teaching principal. In addition, there is a school-based special education teacher (SET) who is shared with another school and a full-time special needs assistant (SNA). There were eighteen pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
• The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Mathematics is good, with some pupils achieving very good standards.
• Pupils’ learning experiences in Mathematics are good; further focus on developing higher-order skills is needed.
• Teaching in Mathematics is good overall and pupils respond well to teacher questioning.
• Assessment practice is effective and pupils’ attainment is tracked purposefully as they progress through the school.
• Special education support for Mathematics is commendable; target-setting is an area for improvement.
• School planning for Mathematics is very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS
• Pupils should be given more opportunities to create and solve problems, to justify their answers and to develop their critical thinking skills.
• The targets in Student Support Files should be revised to ensure they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timed (SMART).

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of pupils’ learning in Mathematics is good, with very good standards being achieved by some pupils. Both in the focus group discussion and in the learning settings, pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to Mathematics. They had a good understanding of how their skills could be applied to experiences outside of school. Pupils in all settings used mathematical language competently across the strands, and most pupils demonstrated good ability to explain their answers. It is recommended that more frequent opportunities for pupils to create and solve problems, to justify their answers and to develop their critical thinking skills be provided to further enhance
learning outcomes. The presentation of pupils’ written work in Mathematics in the middle and senior classes is of a very high standard.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE

Overall, the quality of learner experiences provided for pupils in Mathematics is good. The lessons in all settings were differentiated and appropriately challenging. Pupils were also given valuable opportunities to use a range of concrete materials. The application of Mathematics to real life situations was discussed in each lesson observed. The pupils have engaged in a number of projects that are integrated effectively with Mathematics. One example is the Run Around Europe Challenge, being used as part of the Active School Flag activities. The pupils’ surveying, estimation, measurement and graphing skills have been developed as part of the school’s engagement with Green-Schools and the Junior Entrepreneur Programme.

The overall quality of teaching is good. Some very good-quality teaching was also observed. Where practice was of a very high quality, the intended learning outcome was shared with the pupils, lessons were clearly structured and there was appropriate use of individual, pair and group work. It is recommended that the skills necessary for effective group and pair work be further developed on a whole-school basis. Teachers monitor pupils’ work regularly, with good formative feedback evident in pupils’ copybooks.

Effective models of support for pupils in Mathematics are delivered through withdrawal and in-class support. Student Support Files are developed collaboratively in accordance with the National Educational Psychological Service’s (NEPS) Continuum of Support. In order to more clearly document pupils’ progress, the targets in Student Support Files should be revised to ensure they are SMART.

The overall quality of assessment is good. A range of strategies is used by teachers to assess learning, including skills’ checklists, work samples, teacher-designed tests and termly assessments. Data from standardised tests is analysed robustly at whole-school level and pupils’ attainment is tracked as they progress through the school.

All teachers demonstrated very good classroom management skills and pupils’ behaviour was excellent during the evaluation. Interactions with and between pupils were highly respectful. Good-quality mathematical displays and resources were evident in all settings.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING

School planning to progress pupils’ learning in Mathematics is very good. Individual teachers’ planning provides useful guidance on methodologies, mathematical language and learner outcomes. Monthly progress reports and work in the pupils’ copybooks indicate that a broad and balanced programme in Mathematics is provided.

The school has engaged very well previously with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process for numeracy. It is recommended that the school now re-engage with the SSE process for numeracy with a focus on developing higher-order mathematical skills.
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 of Burriscarra NS, welcomes the curriculum evaluation report and its affirmation of the quality of school planning, teaching and learning in Mathematics. We endorse its findings. The board appreciates that the Inspectorate deemed the quality of pupils learning in Mathematics to be good with very good standards also being achieved. The board appreciates that the Inspectorate recognises the effective integration of Mathematics across the curriculum through a number of initiatives that our school has engaged in. The board is also very pleased that the Inspectorate deems the quality of school planning for Mathematics to be very good and that a broad and balanced programme in Mathematics is provided.

The board is happy to confirm that the recommendations made by the Inspectorate have begun to be addressed. We look forward to further enhancing the teaching and learning of Mathematics 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>
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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 <strong>outstanding</strong> 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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