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>Cloghroe Mixed N S</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Blarney Co Cork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>07242M</td>
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Date of inspection: 22-02-2018
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; a response was not received from the board.
**Curriculum Evaluation**

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**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**

Cloghroe National School is a mainstream catholic primary school located circa ten kilometres north-west of Cork city. The school has twenty classroom teachers and eight special education posts, two of which are shared with other schools in the area. At the time of the evaluation there were 507 pupils on roll.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Mathematics is very good. Some potential to integrate pupils’ prior learning into provision for the area of measures was noted.
- The overall quality of learner experiences observed in the school was very good. There was high quality teaching in all of the lessons observed. More extensive use of information and communications technology (ICT) and project work would provide an extended range of contexts for pupils to develop and apply their learning.
- Teachers employ an effective range of approaches to assessing pupils’ progress in Mathematics. Some very good examples of formative assessment practices were noted.
- High quality support is provided for pupils with special educational needs in Mathematics. Further developing the approaches employed to documenting and recording ongoing progress in these settings would enhance practice.
- The overall effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils’ learning is very good.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Teachers should extend the use of formative assessment approaches and accordingly, include provision for differentiation in short-term planning.
- The use of ICT and project work should be extended to provide a broader range of contexts for pupils to develop and apply their learning.
- Teachers should integrate all aspects of pupils’ prior learning in measures into the current good practice of applying mathematical learning to practical applications.
- The approach to documenting and recording the ongoing progress of pupils with special educational needs should be further developed.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Mathematics is very good. The majority of pupils observed, in all learning settings, displayed enthusiasm for their learning and demonstrated high levels of understanding of a broad range of mathematical skills and concepts. They worked comfortably, both individually and in groups, and used mathematical language confidently and competently when communicating and justifying strategies and opinions. They displayed a well-developed ability to integrate and connect their learning across the curricular strands and generally applied their knowledge to real-life situations in a very effective manner. Some scope to further integrate aspects of pupils’ prior learning in the measures strand of the curriculum into the school provision for this area of learning was noted.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The overall quality of learner experiences observed in the school was very good. Classrooms presented as positive and secure learning environments in which pupils enthusiastically shared, evaluated and critiqued approaches and strategies to addressing mathematical problems and operations. A broad range of concrete manipulatives was available and utilised in an effective manner to scaffold pupils’ understanding of key concepts. During a focus group meeting, pupils highlighted the opportunities to engage in mathematical trails as particularly positive features of their learning. To build on the very positive work already underway in the school, an increased focus should be placed on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and project work to extend the range of contexts for pupils to develop and apply their learning.

There was high quality teaching in all of the lessons observed. Learning activities were very well structured. Teachers provided clear instruction and a range of active learning opportunities for the pupils. Teacher questioning was very effective in promoting dialogue and discussion amongst the pupils on mathematical approaches and outcomes. Meaningful opportunities were provided for pupils to engage with a broad range of problem-solving activities, incorporating learning from across the curricular strands. Pupils’ written work was closely monitored and examples of positive and constructive feedback in copybooks were noted. All teachers closely monitor pupils’ attainment and very effective use of assessment data to inform teacher planning was noted in some settings. Provision for differentiated teaching to meet the range of pupils’ needs and abilities should be included in all teachers short-term planning.

Clear targeted and high-quality teaching was observed in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school is currently in the process of developing and embedding the continuum of support process. The quality of target setting in individual and group education plans is generally good. However, scope to further develop the approach to documenting ongoing pupil progress in these settings was noted.
3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING
The overall effectiveness of school planning, including SSE in progressing pupils’ learning is very good. The whole-school plan contains very clear and accessible guidance for teachers on strategies and approaches to the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers plan collaboratively at all class levels and collectively agree and implement whole-school approaches to teaching and learning to improve pupils’ experiences and outcomes. The school has conducted diagnostic analyses of a range of school assessment data and areas such as mathematical language, problem-solving and measures have been targeted for whole-school attention. Very high levels of awareness of these priorities were noted in classrooms and the targeted areas were clearly reflected in teachers’ planning and practice.

4. CHILD PROTECTION
During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school’s child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the school’s reception area.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.
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><strong>Very Good</strong></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><strong>Good</strong></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><strong>Satisfactory</strong></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><strong>Fair</strong></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><strong>Weak</strong></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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