

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Glenmaquin National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Knockbrack Letterkenny County Donegal
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	097481

Date of inspection: 21-01-2020



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agus Scileanna**
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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 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	21-01-2020
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents• Pupil focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Glenmaquin National School is a rural co-educational school which is under the patronage of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The school caters for twenty-three pupils from junior infants to sixth class. The teaching staff comprises two mainstream teachers and one part-time special education teacher who is based elsewhere. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of learning in Mathematics is good; pupils have a good ability to compute accurately and they are able to articulate their learning.
- The learning experiences provided for pupils is very good and this enables them to extend their mathematical thinking with confidence.
- The overall quality of teaching in Mathematics is very good; teachers are very skilful in their approach to catering for the varying abilities and multi-grade classes.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good overall; target setting in support plans is not refined for Mathematics.
- Whole-school planning for Mathematics is good; concept and skills development is not outlined for each class level.
- The school has engaged very successfully in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process within the DEIS plan; however, target setting does not relate directly to identified actions in the plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further consideration should be given to interpreting the assessment data to set specific targets for all pupils as part of planning for the Continuum of Support and to guide team-teaching practices for Mathematics.
- The whole-school plan for Mathematics should include detail of the concepts and skills to be covered at each class level as pertains to the Mathematics curriculum.
- Target setting for numeracy in the DEIS plan should directly relate to the identified actions in the plan.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of learning in Mathematics is good. Pupils have a good ability to compute accurately and they are able to articulate their learning. They display good skills in discussing logical procedures when responding to mathematical questions. They have a good understanding of concepts and connect Mathematics to real-life contexts successfully. Pupils were observed to be enjoying their learning and engage very well in lessons. Pupils were particularly involved in their learning when they were using practical investigations to discuss and record their mathematical tasks. In the lessons observed pupils had a good awareness of and an ability to implement a range of mathematical skills especially in the strands of *Measures* and *Number*. The overall attainment of the pupils in standardised tests is of a high standard.

Pupils who participated in the pupil-focus group discussion reported that they enjoy learning Mathematics particularly when they are active in their learning. They spoke of their interest in problem solving and using a strategy and concrete materials to solve mathematical challenges, completing maths trails and working with younger pupils during maths week.

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

The learning experiences provided for pupils are very good. Attractive stimulating learning environments are provided by all teachers and learning in Mathematics is celebrated through wall displays and personal pupil identification of very good work. High levels of interest and participation were observed during lessons. Pupils are provided with engaging opportunities to participate in collaborative learning. Purposeful pupil engagement with meaningful tasks was observed in all settings. They benefited greatly from their assigned roles within their learning groups and through this participation pupils were enabled to articulate their mathematical thinking with confidence. They have access to and evidently use relevant mathematical resources including manipulatives and personal dictionaries which includes mathematical terminology to a very good standard.

The overall quality of teaching in Mathematics is very good. All teachers demonstrate highly effective classroom management skills. Teachers employ an effective blend of methodologies including well-structured whole-class teaching, small group and individual teaching. Teachers are very skilful in their approach to catering for the varying abilities and multi-grade classes in both classrooms. Teachers cultivate a positive mathematics' learning environment where pupils are appropriately supported, encouraged and affirmed. Very effective questioning techniques are used to ascertain pupils' understanding and application of mathematical concepts. Teachers were observed facilitating gainful active progressive learning. Overall, classroom practices are having a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

The overall quality of assessment is good. A good range of assessment data is gathered in both classrooms. Teachers currently use checklists, tasks and tests including standardised assessment to monitor progress in learning. Pupils' written work is monitored carefully. During lessons teachers identified success criteria and pupils were provided with opportunities to self-assess.

Support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good overall. Support is provided through team-teaching and the withdrawal of pupils for targeted support. However, further consideration should be given to administering diagnostic mathematical tests where relevant and interpreting all available assessment data to set specific targets for all pupils as part of planning for the Continuum of Support and to guide team teaching practices. Pre- and post- intervention testing is required to monitor the impact of team-teaching on the progress of pupils with varying abilities.

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

The overall quality of whole-school planning for Mathematics is good. Teachers have collectively developed the whole-school plan for Mathematics. The plan provides for the teaching of all strands and strand units of the curriculum and includes agreed whole-school approaches to the language of Mathematics. The whole school plan should also provide a developmental approach to assessment for learning in Mathematics and outline details of the concepts and skills to be covered at each class level as pertains to the strands of the mathematics curriculum.

The school has engaged very successfully in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process within the DEIS plan. The school's engagement in whole-school planning and in self-evaluation processes is impacting positively on teachers' practice and on pupils' learning experiences in the area of problem solving. Data from standardised tests has been analysed and used to inform a focus for teaching and learning within the DEIS plan. However, targets in the numeracy aspect of the DEIS plan should directly relate to the actions identified in the plan.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Glenmaquin NS wishes to acknowledge receipt of the recent Curriculum Evaluation inspection report conducted in our school, focussing on Mathematics. The Board of Management and school staff are delighted to welcome this positive report and the recommendations outlined. The report affirms the strong commitment to the teaching and learning of Mathematics in the school and acknowledges the initiatives which are currently being successfully implemented.

We are pleased that the quality of learner experiences and teaching in maths is reported as very good and that the quality of learning is good. The noted high levels of engagement and attainment is reaffirming. Furthermore we are pleased to see classroom management and our approaches to catering for a multi-grade class and varying abilities highlighted as strengths in our school.

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 findings and recommendations of the report have been noted and will be used as the basis for future development

- We have amended our Maths Policy to include the concepts and skills to be covered at each class level in the Maths Curriculum
- We have updated our Numeracy DEIS Plan's targets to directly relate to our actions in the plan
- Diagnostic mathematical testing will take place pre and post intervention to track pupil progress and set specific targets as part of the Continuum of Support and to guide team teaching
- We believe that the recommendations outlined in the report are achievable and will further enhance the quality of teaching and learning 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.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good 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.	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
Good	Good 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
Satisfactory	Satisfactory 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
Fair	Fair 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
Weak	Weak 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;