Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Náisiúnta Chill Choinnigh</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Kilkenny Glenties County Donegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>13563S</td>
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Date of inspection: 20-11-2018
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 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  20-11-2018

| Inspection activities undertaken | • Observation of teaching and learning |
| • Discussion with principal and teachers | • Examination of pupils’ work |
| • Review of relevant documents | • Interaction with pupils |
| • Pupil focus-group interview | • Feedback to principal and teachers |

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Scoil Náisiúnta Cill Choinnigh is a rural, two teacher, co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Raphoe. The school has a part-time special education teacher (SET) who is based in the school. The school caters for eighteen pupils who are distributed across two mainstream classes from junior infants to sixth class. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in School (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
• The overall quality of pupils’ learning achievements in Mathematics is very good.
• Very effective learning experiences are provided for pupils and they demonstrate very high levels of participation and enjoyment in Mathematics.
• Leadership has very significant strengths in creating a culture of collaboration and creativity in teaching and learning in the two multi-grade classrooms and there is a continuous focus on improvement in Mathematics.
• The overall quality of teaching is of an exceptionally high standard.
• All teachers support pupils in Mathematics very effectively and assessment data is used to ensure that programmes of learning are differentiated to support and challenge pupils; specific targets are not outlined for all pupils in the Continuum of Support planning.
• School planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) and DEIS planning, is very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS
• Further consideration should be given to interpreting the assessment data to set specific targets for all pupils as part of the Continuum of Support planning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The overall quality of pupils’ learning achievements in Mathematics is very good. Pupils demonstrated very high levels of participation and enjoyment in the subject. Pupils work well independently and are provided with excellent opportunities to work collaboratively. Almost all
pupils show very good conceptual understanding, recall of number facts and can integrate and connect different aspects of their Mathematical learning. They understand and use appropriate mathematical language and are able to communicate their understanding and ideas with teachers and their peers. During the focus group discussion with pupils, conducted as part of the evaluation, all pupils spoke positively about Mathematics. They highlighted certain parts of lessons that they particularly enjoy, including the mental mathematics activities at the beginning of each lesson, problem solving cards which make them think and problem solve individually and in groups, using digital technologies to play computerised mathematics games and to present and display their completed tasks. They detailed the way in which teachers make Mathematics interesting and relevant and the opportunities provided to collaborate on tasks in areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). They also enjoy the coding and computer programming opportunities provided for them.

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

Pupils are provided with opportunities to engage in a wide range of very effective learning experiences. Mathematical visual displays feature prominently in both classrooms and pupils have access to and utilise carefully selected resources including manipulatives, games, trails and digital learning mathematical games and technologies. Pupils reflect constructively on their own learning and record key facts and skills acquired.

The overall quality of teaching is of a very high standard. Teachers prepare very well for their teaching and of particular note is the exemplary planning in place for team-teaching approaches. Teachers are commended for creating secure and respectful learning environments for pupils where all ideas and answers are valued and pupils are motivated to engage in challenging tasks. Mathematical language is specifically planned for and taught and displayed in both classrooms.

Exemplary practice was observed in both classrooms and of particular note was the highly co-ordinated team-teaching approaches. Lessons were structured and paced very well with clear learning outcomes. Team-teaching approaches are used very effectively to promote and encourage pupil-led discussion, co-operative tasks and activity-based learning. During these lessons, teachers checked on pupils’ understanding, challenged pupils to justify their answers and differentiated questions and teaching appropriately. Resources are used successfully to promote understanding and to consolidate learning. Pupils’ early-numeracy skills are promoted effectively through cross curricular activities including Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

Teachers are very skilful in their approach to catering for the varying abilities and multi-grade classes in both classrooms. Support for pupils with special educational needs is met through a judicious combination of team-teaching, early intervention initiatives and the withdrawal of pupils for targeted support. Effective initiatives are in place to improve numeracy and very effective partnership is established with parents. Resource packs are provided for parents which enable them to promote learning at home and to facilitate pupils’ learning during Mathematics and Science events throughout the year. The quality of teachers’ collective practice in Mathematics is very high. All teachers have engaged in continuing professional development in Mathematics and share their expertise in the subject during staff meetings.

Teachers use assessment data very effectively to inform their practice including team-teaching practice and to ensure that programmes of learning are differentiated to support and challenge pupils. Standardised test results are analysed at whole-school level and this analysis is used in
planning for school improvement. Further consideration should be given to interpreting the data to set specific targets for all pupils as part of the Continuum of Support.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of school planning and SSE and DEIS planning is very good. The whole-school plan provides clear guidance for teachers on delivering the curriculum in Mathematics to the multi-grade classes. Curriculum leadership is highly commended for creating the culture of collaboration and creativity in teaching and learning with a continuous focus on improvement in Mathematics. The school has been very successful in implementing a range of interventions, differentiated programmes, team teaching approaches and embedding key strategies to improve literacy and numeracy in both classrooms.
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 Scoil Náisiúnta Chill Choinnigh, welcomes the curriculum evaluation report and its affirmation of the high 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 of a very high standard and that they found pupils demonstrated very high levels of participation and enjoyment in the subject. We are delighted that the Inspectorate classified the quality of teaching to be of an exceptionally high standard and found that all teachers demonstrated highly effective classroom management skills. We are glad that the Inspectorate found that teachers are very skilful in their approach to catering for the varying abilities and multi-grade classes in both classrooms.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

Follow-up actions undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection;

The board is happy to confirm that the recommendation made by the Inspectorate regarding interpreting the assessment data to set specific targets for all pupils as part of the Continuum of Support planning has been implemented since the time of the inspection.
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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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<td><strong>Very Good</strong></td>
<td><em>Very good</em> 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><em>Good</em> 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><em>Satisfactory</em> 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><em>Fair</em> 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><em>Weak</em> 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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