

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Curragh Camp G.N.S.
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Curragh Camp Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16636L

Date of inspection: 05-12-2019



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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(s) 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.

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.

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.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	05-12-2019
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

Curragh Camp Girls' National School, located in a rural setting in Co. Kildare, caters for 76 girls from junior infants to sixth class. It is under the joint patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin and the Minister of Defence. The school participates in Band 1 of Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The school staff comprises four mainstream teachers, two special education teachers (SET) based in the school and one part-time special education teacher who is not school based. The school also has the services of a full-time home school community liaison (HSCL) coordinator who is shared between three schools in the Curragh Camp.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is generally good.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics is good overall and pupils enjoy their learning.
- The quality of teaching is good overall; however, there is a need for all teachers to enable pupils to apply their learning to real-life situations.
- The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory; assessment data is not used consistently to inform differentiated learning experiences.
- While support for pupils with special educational needs is positive and supportive, assessment data is not being used to its potential to determine pupils' additional learning needs in Mathematics and the setting of relevant and specific targets to address these learning needs is not a consistent feature of practice.
- Both special education teachers are currently deployed inappropriately in that they are teaching Mathematics to mainstream class groupings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should make use of its special educational needs resources in compliance with the terms of circular 0013/2017.
- All teachers should ensure that lessons promote pupils' deeper understanding of mathematical concepts to enable them to apply their learning in a range of contexts.
- The school should make greater use of assessment data to identify pupils' learning needs in numeracy and ensure that the targets set to address these needs are relevant, specific and measurable.
- All teachers should analyse assessment data and ensure that short-term planning includes appropriate learning outcomes to cater for the range of learners in each setting.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning is generally good. Pupils, for the most part, display good levels of interest and motivation in their learning activities and respond enthusiastically to teacher questioning. The majority of pupils are able to compute accurately, carry out operations and make use of facts learned in previous lessons. Many demonstrate good estimation skills and an ability to use appropriate mathematical language when describing their learning. In the lessons observed, pupils achieved good learning outcomes in the strands of *Number* and *Measures*. Pupils' proficiency in the strand of *Data* is in need of development and the school has identified this as an area of focus for improvement. Ready Set Go Maths strategies are used effectively in the infant classes to promote early mathematical activities. Interactions with pupils in the focus group indicate that they enjoy their learning in Mathematics and, in particular, the use of games and of digital technologies. Many describe their learning experience in the subject as fun. Where learning was most successful, pupils were actively involved, made use of concrete materials and engaged in meaningful Mathematics discussion to strengthen their understanding of concepts and to make connections with real-life situations. Such experiences should be a feature of learning in all settings and pupils should be enabled to generalise and apply their learning in Mathematics in real-life, problem-solving situations.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics is good overall. Learning environments are supportive of pupils' learning in the subject and effective use is made of digital technologies to enhance pupil engagement. Pupils have access to a good range of relevant learning resources including manipulatives. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils were given opportunities to participate in collaborative tasks including pair-work and work in small groups. Pupils were given opportunities to develop their mathematical thinking through guided discussion. Effective play-based learning was a feature of the good practice observed in infant classes.

The overall quality of teaching is good, and the practice observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. Teachers prepare clear and useful short-term planning which reflects the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers demonstrate positive classroom management skills and employ an effective blend of methodologies. Where practice was most effective, teachers made use of questioning techniques to ascertain, extend and consolidate pupils' understanding of concepts and they guided them in using these concepts in problem solving.

The quality of assessment is satisfactory. All teachers use a range of assessment strategies and maintain records of pupil progress. Pupils' written work is monitored carefully although the provision of formative feedback is limited. While there is some evidence of assessment data analysis, there is a need for a consistent, whole-school approach to this in order to inform planning for differentiated learning outcomes for pupils and to inform team-teaching approaches.

Support for pupils with special educational needs in numeracy is satisfactory overall. While interactions are positive and encouraging, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to the identification of pupils' learning needs. The school should ensure that the support provided is reflective of these needs and addresses them in an incremental manner through specific and measurable targets. Furthermore, a strategic approach to team-teaching and in-class interventions is required to ensure that the identified needs of all learners are addressed effectively.

At the time of the evaluation the school was deploying two special education teachers to teach Mathematics to individual class-level groupings as part of their teaching duties. This practice is not in keeping with the terms of Circular 0013/2017. The board should comply fully with this circular and ensure that the supports provided to pupils are based on identified needs and that pupils with the greatest levels of need have access to the greatest level of support.

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

Overall the quality of whole-school planning is good. Teachers have worked collaboratively to develop the whole-school plan for Mathematics and use it as a basis for their individual planning.

An audit of the school's environment and the identification of maths trails would be a worthwhile addition to the school plan in order to increase pupils' ability to link Mathematics to the world around them. Teachers and parents, with the support of the HSCL, collaborate successfully in the implementation of the *Maths for Fun* initiative at infant level.

The school has engaged successfully in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process within the DEIS plan and teachers are aware of the school's improvement targets. Engagement in the SSE process is impacting positively on learner experiences.

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;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of the Curragh GNS welcomes this positive inspection report and is pleased with the content therein, especially with regard to the overall quality of pupils' learning experiences and the good quality teaching. The noted high levels of interest, motivation and attitudes towards maths in the school is reaffirming. Furthermore we were pleased to see areas such as classroom management and teaching methodologies highlighted as strengths across the school. We are confident that this report will inspire everyone in our school to continue to provide a high level of education to our pupils and agree with the recommendations regarding improvement.

Area 2 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 recognise and accept the findings and recommendations that were made in this Curriculum Evaluation report and are happy to implement them.

Special education teachers, as originally planned, are now being deployed to work solely with identified children through a mixture of withdrawal and in-class support in compliance with the terms of circular 0013/2017. Children that scored a STEN of 4 or lower in Standardized tests receive access to SET support.

At the time of this inspection the school was awaiting PDST support for Team Teaching in Mathematics. This support is scheduled to occur in January. The school will endeavour to formalize our formative assessment as it is currently informal in nature. From this a more concerted effort to use the formative assessment data to inform target setting and planning will be employed.

The management and staff are committed to continue to explore ways to enrich students learning during their time in the Curragh GNS.