

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Náisiúnta Eoin Baisde Cailíní Sinsearach
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Seafield Road West Clontarf Dublin 3 D03 T803
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17148D

Date of inspection: 23-01-2018



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(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.

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.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	23-01-2018
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

Eoin Baisde Cailiní Sinsearacha is an urban senior girls' school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. There are 421 pupils enrolled across fifteen mainstream classes, and there are four special education teachers, one of whom is shared with another school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning is very good with pupils exhibiting a very good awareness of how their own mathematical skills are developing.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences is very good; some potential for development exists in respect of the use of pupils' enquiry questions as the basis for mathematical investigations.
- In-class support provision is very effective in providing additional opportunities for pupils to engage in active learning, mathematical thinking and discussion.
- Learning objectives for target pupils in receipt of additional support are not delineated to an optimum level and record-keeping is not fully successful in recording teachers' ongoing observations of these pupils' learning.
- Assessment practices are very well developed; the range of formative assessment practices could be usefully extended through the provision of more regular opportunities for pupils to write reflections on their mathematical learning.
- The effectiveness of school planning for Mathematics is very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils' enquiry questions should be recorded and used as the basis for ongoing pupil-led mathematical investigations.
- The learning objectives for in-class support should be clearly delineated in terms of the range of pupil ability and a contemporaneous record of target pupils' learning should be maintained by all teachers involved in in-class support provision.
- Pupils should receive opportunities to write about their learning in Mathematics.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning is very good. In the lessons observed and in the course of interactions, pupils presented as interested, enthusiastic and highly motivated learners. Pupils demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of the breadth of the mathematics curriculum. In particular, they have a very good awareness of and ability to implement the range of mathematical

skills and they exhibit a very good sense of how their own skills are developing. Many pupils display a very good flexibility of thought and ability to engage in higher order mathematical reasoning. Pupils have a very good understanding of mathematical language, and can explain topic-specific vocabulary accurately. They demonstrate a very good capacity to integrate and connect different aspects of their mathematical learning and are proficient in applying this learning to real-life contexts. Pupils use a wide range of appropriate strategies to solve problems in Mathematics, and are able to confidently discuss and evaluate the efficiency of these approaches.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics is very good. Pupils engage very well in collaborative learning activities with due regard to mathematical thinking, talking and confidence to investigate a range of solution strategies. Pupils in the focus-group discussion talked very positively about their interesting learning experiences and the collaborative nature of their learning; they presented as reflective and confident learners with a clear interest in engaging in consistently stimulating and appropriately challenging learning experiences.

The overall quality of teaching is very good. In all observed settings, teachers' practice was very skilled and very effective in creating interesting and appropriately differentiated learning experiences. Teachers place an explicit focus on the correct use of mathematical language and have been very successful in their creation of positive learning environments wherein pupils are encouraged to ask questions and to engage in the co-construction of mathematical knowledge. While all teacher questioning was focused and structured, there were a few instances where there was scope for teachers to incorporate more open-ended questions which would stimulate whole-class curiosity and discussion and convey a shared sense of mathematical discovery. It is notable that a number of very interesting and thought-provoking questions were posed by pupils during the evaluation, and teachers were observed to give appropriate consideration and regard to these questions. To optimise the potential of these rich learning opportunities, it is recommended that teachers develop a system of recording these enquiry questions for ongoing investigation.

Support for pupils with additional learning needs is provided through in-class support. The pupils in the focus-group spoke very positively about how this in-class support provision enriched their learning experiences and it is evident that it is very effective in providing additional opportunities for pupils to engage in active learning, mathematical thinking and discussion. There is a clear rationale for the allocation of pupils to specific groups, and it is commendable that these mixed-ability groups are regularly rotated depending on the learning needs of particular pupils. However, learning objectives for these pupils are not delineated to an optimum level while record-keeping is not fully successful in recording contemporaneous observations of pupils' learning. There is scope to develop current systems for monitoring and recording progress for target pupils within these mixed-ability groups; specific objectives for target pupils should be delineated and a contemporaneous record of their learning should be maintained by both the mainstream and the special education teacher.

Assessment practices are very well developed. A range of purposeful assessment practices is implemented and information from these assessments is used to inform future mathematics work. As a means of extending the range of formative assessment practices and consolidating pupils'

understanding and skill development, more structured opportunities should be provided for pupils to write accounts of their mathematical learning.

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

The effectiveness of school planning for Mathematics is very good. The whole-school plan, which is currently being revised, reflects the breadth and balance of the mathematics curriculum and clearly outlines the approaches and methodologies in use in the school. Teachers' short-term planning is successful in outlining anticipated learning and provides very effectively for continuity and progression in pupils' learning. To optimise learning for the diversity of learning needs, teachers' planning for differentiation should include explicit reference to differentiated learning objectives.

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.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board appreciates the succinctness of the report and the clarity of its recommendations.

The report findings arising from the evaluation are constructive, fair and supportive.

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

Following consultation with staff, the following actions will be taken in response to the recommendations made in the report:

- Where there is an in-class target group, a contemporaneous record will be kept by the class teacher and SEN teacher (using a template) and it will remain in the classroom,
- Distinct learning objectives for target pupils will be identified and recorded in fortnightly plans and cúntais mhíosúla,
- The number of learning outcomes for target pupils will be reduced if necessary,
- Reserve an area in classrooms to record mathematical investigations that can be added to over a period of time,
- Allow opportunities for children to record their findings in words using mathematical vocabulary learnt,
- Develop self-assessments after each topic e.g. how pupils found the topic – easy/difficult/manageable; what parts they may have found difficult etc.,
- Extend senior class maths-rule notebooks to include a personal learning reflection.

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;