

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	S N Bhríde
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Suncroft The Curragh Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18031K

Date of inspection: 13-11-2019



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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.

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	13-11-2019
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

Scoil Bhríde is a co-educational primary school located in Suncroft, a rural village in the Curragh, Co. Kildare. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. At the time of the inspection, there were 65 pupils enrolled. Due to a gradual decline in pupil numbers, the school decreased from four mainstream classes to three at the start of this academic year. In addition to the three mainstream class teachers, the school has two full-time special education needs teachers (SET) based in the school, and one part-time SET who is based in another school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Pupils' learning is of good quality; they are motivated to learn and apply themselves well to set tasks.
- While teaching is good overall, there is scope to extend provision for activity-based learning, problem solving and the use of the environment.
- Teachers use a range of assessment strategies, but do not make sufficient use of this data to inform provision for differentiated teaching and learning, or to set specific measurable targets in special educational needs (SEN) settings.
- The SEN teachers based in the school are currently deployed inappropriately for part of their teaching duties as they teach Mathematics to mainstream class groupings.
- School planning for Mathematics is satisfactory overall; not all areas identified for improvement through the school self-evaluation (SSE) process have yet been implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive additional support in accordance with their assessed requirements, the board of management should ensure that all teachers are deployed in compliance with Circular 0013/2017.
- Teachers should extend provision for pupils' engagement in practical mathematics activities, mathematics trails and open-ended problem solving.
- Teachers should refine their use of assessment data so that it informs pupils' next steps in learning, in both mainstream and SEN settings, and better serves to track their progress.
- The school should establish processes to review the impact of school improvement plans within the SSE process.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils' learning is good. Pupils are motivated learners and apply themselves well to activities and textbook assignments. When enabled, they share their mathematical thinking and use subject-specific vocabulary appropriately. Pupils are able to make some links between Mathematics and other subjects, and with every-day life. Most pupils can apply strategies in written mathematics capably, but are less secure in their understanding of the concepts underpinning them. During the focus-group discussion, pupils reported that they enjoy Mathematics, but that their use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons is limited.

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

Pupils' learner experiences are of good quality overall. Their learning is supported and celebrated through a range of attractive displays, both in the classrooms and on the corridors. In the middle and senior classes, learning is mainly text-book based with some provision for activity-based learning. In other classes, teachers enable pupils to use a broader range of relevant mathematical resources to support their learning. Overall, pupils would benefit from more regular opportunities to engage in open-ended problem solving and from understanding strategies before applying them. To enable all pupils to engage in suitably challenging work, they would benefit from greater differentiation in teaching and tasks.

Teaching is good overall. Teachers share learning objectives and make effective use of questioning to elicit pupils' prior knowledge, check for understanding and, in the best instances, challenge pupils' thinking. They place due regard on the promotion and application of subject-specific vocabulary. Overall, lessons are primarily teacher directed; to deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts, teachers should place increased emphasis on the development and application of practical skills. They should also make provision for more open-ended mathematical experiences, and on enabling pupils to apply Mathematics in the environment. Teachers differentiate between the class levels. However, they make insufficient provision for differentiation within classes; they should ensure that activities are modified so they are appropriately challenging for all pupils.

Teachers prepare adequate plans of work to support their teaching. Their planning is predominantly textbook driven and indicates an over-arching emphasis on the strand of number. Teachers need to ensure that pupils are exposed to a better balance of the strands over the course of the year.

The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory. Teachers monitor pupils' work regularly. They maintain records of a range of assessments, including half-termly tests and standardised tests, and individual pupil portfolios. They do not yet make sufficient use of assessment data to inform their planning or to monitor pupils' progress at individual or whole-school level.

Support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is satisfactory overall. SEN teachers have assumed responsibility for teaching some mainstream classes. To ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive additional support in accordance with their assessed requirements, these teachers should be deployed in compliance with Circular 0013/2017. SEN support is provided exclusively in attractive withdrawal settings. SEN teachers are encouraging and supportive of these pupils, and enable them to use practical materials to support their learning. In the planned upcoming review of SEN delivery, the school should ensure that targets are more closely linked to pupils' identified needs and are specific enough to track their progress effectively.

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

The school has engaged previously in the SSE process in the area of Mathematics; the school should revisit the agreed actions to see if they have had an impact on learning and teaching. To ensure a more balanced learning experience for pupils, the school plan should provide greater guidance on the delivery of strands over the course of the year.

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 Suncroft National School welcomes the findings and recommendations of this report and find them to be positive and helpful.

The Board commends the students and staff on the positive findings identified in the report.

The management and staff are committed to continue to explore ways to enrich students' learning during their time in Suncroft National School.

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

The SEN timetables within the school have been reviewed and SEN teachers are now deployed in compliance with Circular 0013/2017.

The staff have extended provision for pupils' engagement in practical mathematical activities and the use of ICT in lessons.

The staff intend to review the impact of school improvement plans within the SSE process and also will make every effort to refine the use of assessment date within the school.

The school has applied to the PDST for support in the area of team teaching in mathematics.