An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Queen Of Universe N S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School address</td>
<td>Long Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muine bheag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co Carlow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll number</td>
<td>18183K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of inspection: 01-05-2019
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 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.

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  01-05-2019

Inspection activities undertaken

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

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Queen of the Universe N S is situated in Bagenalstown, Co Carlow and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The school is co-educational for pupils until first class and provides education to girls only from second to sixth class. There is a unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) attached to the school. At the time of the evaluation there were 256 pupils enrolled at the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Mathematics is good; pupils present as motivated and interested learners, there is scope to increase opportunities for pupils to represent their learning.
- The overall quality of pupils’ learning experiences in Mathematics is very good, a broad range of interesting, meaningful and differentiated-learning experiences are provided to pupils.
- The overall quality of teachers’ practice is good with some very good practice observed, highly focused teaching and planning was observed in some settings.
- While the overall quality of assessment is good there is considerable variance in practice from class to class.
- The overall quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) for Mathematics is good and there is a contextualised and useful whole-school plan.
- The teachers and school leaders are praised for the highly inclusive learning environment in Mathematics which they have created for pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order to help pupils to further consolidate their learning, teachers should provide pupils with individual or collective opportunities within Mathematics lessons to report and represent their learning.
- In order to further develop the quality of teaching, the school should identify, agree and implement a consistent approach to assessment in Mathematics.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Mathematics is good. There is evidence that the pupils’ learning in Mathematics, particularly in the area of data and problem-solving is at a good level and is continuing to improve. Most pupils could accurately complete mathematical procedures and demonstrated the use and understanding of good mathematical language.

Pupils presented as engaged and interested learners. During a focus group of pupils conducted as part of the evaluation, all pupils indicated that they enjoyed Mathematics. Pupils noted the satisfaction they get from figuring out a problem and could clearly articulate strategies they use when problem-solving. During classroom interactions, pupils responded positively to questions across the strands and displayed perseverance in completing tasks assigned to them. In some classes, pupils could not connect their learning in Mathematics to the real-world and teachers are advised to regularly connect Mathematical concepts to real-life situations.

Mathematics is well supported with numeracy boards in all classes and communal areas. In most cases, there is scope to include more of the pupils’ learning in Mathematics to these displays. During the focus group, pupils identified how writing and drawing help them to recall their learning in Mathematics. In order to help pupils to further consolidate their learning, teachers should provide them with individual or collective opportunities within Mathematics lessons to report and represent their learning. The school should agree and implement a consistent and practical approach to how this can be realised at each class level.

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

The overall quality of pupils’ learning experiences is very good. The successful integration of pupils attending the ASD class is a particular strength of the school and praiseworthy inclusive interactions between pupils and teachers and among pupils were a feature of all lessons observed. Pupils engage in a range of meaningful activities in groups, pairs and individually. The school actively promotes the integration of Mathematics into generic experiences such as tending to the school hens, visiting local shops, baking and getting fit. Regular presentation of certificates and trophies, competitions and the use of web-based Mathematical games are used to develop the pupils’ positive attitude towards Mathematics.

Pupils are given opportunities to engage in regular oral Mathematics practice. Tables games, skip-counting and loop games were observed during the evaluation. In the focus group, pupils discussed how they enjoy the challenge of these activities. Teachers should plan for oral Mathematics across the curriculum in order to consolidate pupils’ learning in all strands.

Overall teachers’ practice is good with some very good practice also observed. Teachers are clear communicators and demonstrated very good classroom management skills. A wide range of suitable teaching approaches were observed including group and pair work, guided discovery, opportunities to work on explorative tasks, station teaching and team-teaching. There was clear and consistent teaching of mathematical vocabulary and procedure in all settings. In the best instances, teachers planned and provided skills-based lessons. In these classes, teachers focused their teaching on explaining and showing pupils how to overcome challenges in the new learning. This highly effective practice should be extended to all settings.
The overall quality of assessment in Mathematics is good with very good practice also observed. While an informative range of assessment data is collected on pupils’ achievement in Mathematics, there is considerable variance in the nature and quality of the data collected. In a small number of highly-effective settings, teachers have analysed pupils’ work, provided formative feedback to work samples and created teacher-designed tests. Where notable practice was observed teachers used learning outcomes from their individual planning as a checklist to track pupils’ progress at the end of the session. In order to further develop assessment practices, the school should identify, agree and implement a consistent approach to assessment and planning in Mathematics. This approach should consider the cyclical nature of planning, teaching and assessment.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING
The overall quality of school planning, including SSE is good. There is a contextualised whole-school plan for Mathematics and this provides useful detail on the teaching of mathematical language and mathematical procedures. The school should identify ways to forge stronger links between the school plan and teachers’ individual and collective practice and planning.

The school had previously identified Mathematics as an area of focus for SSE. Agreed actions within the SSE process continue to be visible in classrooms and are having a positive impact on pupils’ learning.

The teachers and principal are commended for the leadership they provide for Mathematics in the school. There is a spirit of collaboration and collegiality among the staff which supports the development of an inclusive and pupil-centred provision in Mathematics.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong> 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good</strong> 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong> 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weak</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weak</strong> 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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Queen of the Universe N.S. welcomes the report and its affirmation of the quality of school planning, teaching and learning of Mathematics in our school.

The Board appreciates that the inspection report recognised the very good learning experiences provided for the children, the very good classroom management skills of teachers and integration of pupils with ASD being a particular strength. We are pleased to hear that praiseworthy inclusive interactions between pupils and teachers and among pupils were a feature of all lessons observed. We are also delighted to see that the SSE process is having a positive impact on pupils’ learning.

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 Board is happy to confirm that the recommendations made by the evaluation report have begun to be addressed. Good practice already evident in the school will be used to inform assessment practice across the school.