Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics
REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>S N Barra Naofa Buachaillí</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Beaumont Cork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>19231A</td>
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Date of inspection: 11-04-2018
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. 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.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT
During this inspection, the inspectors 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.
Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection 11-04-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Discussion with principal and teachers</td>
<td>• Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>• Meeting with the school self-evaluation (SSE) team</td>
<td>• Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>• Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td>• Pupil focus-group interview</td>
<td>• Feedback to principal and teachers</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT
SN Barra Naofa Buachaillí, under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross has an enrolment of 287 boys. The school has an administrative principal, eleven mainstream class teachers and seven special education teachers (SETs).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
• The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Mathematics is very good; most pupils demonstrate a well-developed ability to reason and a very good capacity to describe their thinking strategies.
• The overall quality of pupils’ learning experiences is very good; pupils’ contributions to lessons are encouraged and affirmed.
• The overall quality of teaching is very good; very effective practice was observed where special education support teachers (SETs) provided targeted support in mainstream lessons.
• While the overall quality of teacher planning, including the preparation of pupil-support plans, is very good, there is a need for SETs to prepare short-term plans.
• The effectiveness of school planning including SSE is good; the whole-school plan for Mathematics would benefit from review to include the broad range of initiatives that are currently incorporated into the provision for Mathematics.
• The deployment of a special education teacher to a mainstream class setting requires immediate attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS
• SETs should prepare short-term planning detailing specific learning outcomes to be achieved.
• The whole-school plan for Mathematics should be reviewed to reflect the range of improvement initiatives implemented in the school.
• The board of management should ensure that all teachers are deployed in compliance with Circular 0013/2017 and the current deployment of a special education teacher to a mainstream class should be discontinued.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils’ learning is very good and their conceptual knowledge, skills and understanding are at a very good standard. In the lessons observed and in the course of the interactions, high levels of engagement were noted and the pupils presented as enthusiastic and motivated learners. Their mental maths skills are developed systematically through consistent oral work at the commencement of lessons. They are enabled to discuss their learning using precise mathematical language and their capacity to outline the strategies used to arrive at solutions merits particular commendation. The results of standardised tests show that attainment is generally very good and the school is successful in maintaining high standards in recent years. The school has directed particular focus towards the development of the pupils’ problem-solving skills and this is impacting positively on pupil-learning outcomes. In the focus-group discussion held with senior pupils, they spoke very positively about their experience in learning Mathematics. They reported that they enjoyed working collaboratively and that group work allowed them time to consolidate their understanding and to share strategies for problem-solving.

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

The overall quality of pupils’ learning experience is very good. Many classrooms feature attractive mathematical displays which scaffold learning. The pupils engage in a broad range of stimulating learning experiences. Their contributions to lessons are encouraged and affirmed. An array of resources and manipulatives is used effectively to support the pupils’ understanding of mathematical concepts. They are provided with regular opportunities to engage in mathematics activities and games and some use is made of maths trails to support enquiry-based learning. Junior pupils were observed to make effective use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and the school is commended for the progress made in implementing its e-Learning plan.

The overall quality of teaching is very good. In almost all lessons, teachers explained concepts clearly and facilitated purposeful learning for the pupils. Lesson activities were appropriately differentiated to accommodate the range of pupils’ abilities and suitably paced to allow for consolidation of concepts. Very good emphasis is placed on the higher order skills of reasoning, justifying and integrating learning in lessons. Teachers use mathematical language explicitly to introduce and explain concepts and to guide pupils’ responses.

Very effective practice was observed where SETs provided targeted support in mainstream maths lessons. In these settings, the pupils were actively engaged in challenging mathematical investigations which facilitated high levels of pupil participation and the shared construction of pupil learning. Early intervention and prevention strategies are successfully prioritised in junior classes and station-teaching activities reflect the influence of teachers’ commitment to continued professional development in Mathematics.

SETs prepare high quality pupil-support plans to aid pupils’ learning in Mathematics. Learning targets are carefully devised and attainment is monitored closely. The special educational needs team is highly praised for the work undertaken on the analysis of need in each mainstream classroom. They provide an annual succinct document to each class teacher which guides and directs individual pupil interventions. It is recommended however, that all SETs consistently prepare short-term planning.
One special education teacher is inappropriately deployed to a mainstream class. The board of management should ensure that all teachers are deployed in compliance with Circular 0013/2017 and the current deployment of a special education teacher to a mainstream class should be discontinued.

The quality of assessment is good. A range of assessment practices is used including recorded teacher observation, checklists and termly tests. Pupils’ written work is monitored frequently and, in some cases, the pupils are provided with constructive written feedback. It is advised that whole-school agreement be reached on the key skills and content to be assessed, the approaches to be employed and the use to be made of the outcomes of assessment. These actions will support the school in its ongoing work towards embedding assessment of and for learning as part of its numeracy plan.

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

The effectiveness of school planning including SSE is good. The school has been successful in establishing some very good practices in teaching and learning and has effectively incorporated improvement targets into the provision for Mathematics. A uniform approach to teaching key operations is implemented, a range of assessment approaches has been explored and improved communication with parents regarding approaches to teaching has been agreed. These advances should now be captured in a revised whole-school plan for Mathematics, thereby ensuring consistency in teaching, assessment and communication with parents.

Very high quality work has been undertaken in the area of school self-evaluation (SSE). The in-school management team is successful in its promotion of a culture of school improvement, collaboration and creativity in teaching and learning. They oversee the implementation of the school improvement plan for numeracy and ensure that teachers are well resourced for lessons. Significant improvements have been made to ICT resources and both the pupils and teachers welcome this initiative. Senior management has introduced a digital format to monitor whole-school implementation of the curriculum and agreed initiatives, on a monthly basis. The consistent use of this mechanism to quality assure provision is praised.

The work undertaken on school improvement initiatives is impacting positively on pupil learning outcomes in Mathematics.
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><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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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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 welcomes the findings of the inspection report and is very pleased with the affirmation of the high quality teaching and learning observed. The board of management feels this is a fair reflection of practice in the 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 school's previous practice of incorporating specific learning outcomes in the pupils' individual educational plans and reviewing same on an ongoing basis throughout the year will continue. The special education teachers will also adopt a short-term planning template as suggested by the inspection team.

The whole school plan for Mathematics is under review and will be updated in 2018/19 to reflect the range of improvement initiatives implemented in the school.

The board of management confirms that all teachers, including all special education teachers, are now deployed in accordance with circular 0013/2017.