An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name
Scoil Mhuire

Seoladh na scoile / School address
Ballyboden
Dublin 16

Uimhir rolla / Roll number
19490B

Date of inspection: 14-05-2019
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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 1 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.
**Curriculum Evaluation**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>14-05-2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discussion with principal and teachers</td>
<td>• Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>• Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>• Pupil focus-group interview</td>
<td>• Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td>• Feedback to principal and teachers</td>
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**SCHOOL CONTEXT**

Scoil Mhuire National School is a co-educational school operating under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school participates in the Department of Education and Skill’s programme of educational inclusion, Delivering Equality of opportunity in Schools (DEIS). Scoil Mhuire comprises eleven mainstream teachers, five special education teachers (SET), a home-school-community-liason (HSCL) teacher and an administrative principal. The school has an enrolment of 235 pupils.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**

- Overall, the quality of the pupils’ learning in Mathematics is commendable and learning for some pupils is very good; there is scope for development in Mathematics learning for a cohort of pupils.
- Overall, teaching practices in Mathematics are commendable; some highly-effective practice was observed.
- School leadership for Mathematics is of a high standard and this ensures that there are a wide range of resources and initiatives in place to support teaching and learning in Mathematics.
- The teachers display excellent classroom management skills and succeed in creating very successful learning environments, which are having a positive impact on the pupils’ learning experiences in Mathematics.
- The school makes good use of assessment data to track pupil progress and to identify individual pupils who require additional support in Mathematics; greater use of assessment data is required to inform target setting and interventions at classroom and whole-school level.
- The quality of school planning, including SSE, in Mathematics is commendable; there is need to develop learner outcome focussed targets within the next review of the DEIS plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The DEIS plan for Mathematics should be reviewed to include clear targets and interventions that are informed by assessment data for the cohort of pupils who are challenged by learning in Mathematics, as well as further learner-outcome focused targets to progress the learning of all pupils.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
   - Overall, the quality of the pupils’ learning in Mathematics is commendable; learning for some pupils is very good.
   - Most pupils demonstrate competence in oral and written computation and number operations. Copybooks contain good quality samples of the pupils’ work in number, which, for the most part, are carefully presented and monitored. In some learning settings there is need for greater use of copybooks and in other settings better monitoring of copybooks is required.
   - Mathematics language learning for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is very successful and very effective practices in this regard should be shared for the benefit of all pupils throughout the school.
   - Pupil attainment is very good in junior classes and for some pupils in middle classes; learning outcomes show scope for development for a cohort of pupils in middle and senior classes. It is recommended that whole-school targets and appropriate programmes and interventions are implemented to improve learning for this cohort of pupils. The numeracy dimension of the school’s DEIS plan should be exploited to improve learning for these pupils.
   - Some pupils could successfully apply their mathematical learning to other aspects of the Mathematics curriculum and to real life situations, while other pupils had difficulty in this regard. It is recommended that all pupils are provided with regular opportunities to apply their learning in Mathematics to other contexts.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
   - For the most part, learning experiences for pupils are of a high standard. In the lessons observed, pupils presented as motivated and interested learners. Their enthusiasm to share their learning of tables throughout the school is highly praised. During the focus-group interview with pupils, the majority of pupils reported they liked Mathematics and that they had regular opportunities to play mathematics games, visit the computer room to learn Mathematics through digital technologies and on some occasions to experience Mathematics in the outdoor environment. As the whole-school plan is updated further, consideration should be given to outlining how the school environment can be further utilised for Mathematics learning.
   - The teachers display excellent classroom management skills and highly respectful interactions were evident between the teachers and pupils and the pupils and each other. Environments are stimulating and number rich. The very successful learning environments are having a positive impact on the pupils’ learning experiences in Mathematics.
   - Overall, teaching practices in Mathematics are commendable; some highly-effective practice was observed. Lessons are well structured and paced and include a wide variety of resources and methodologies. Teachers utilise whole-class teaching, group work and pair work during lessons. For the most part, teachers are skilled communicators and explain concepts very clearly. A wide range of resources is judiciously used by all teachers in Mathematics. Programmes such as Ready Set Go Maths and Maths for Fun are well planned and implemented by relevant teachers.
   - All teachers prepare good quality plans for Mathematics; planning for Mathematical language was very good in all settings observed. Some very effective practice was observed in a small number of settings in relation to planning differentiated-learning outcomes and
activities for pupils at different levels of ability; in the majority of settings, learning outcomes and activities were focussed at the whole class. It is recommended that all teachers plan for differentiated-learning outcomes and activities to ensure pupils are challenged at a level commensurate with their ability. The majority of teachers make good use of the whole-school plan for Mathematics when preparing long and short-term plans, to ensure breadth and balance for all pupils, all teachers should utilise the whole-school plan when planning for Mathematics.

- Teaching in support settings is of a high quality. Supportive interventions have been developed through an appropriate balance of in-class support and the withdrawal of groups and individuals.
- The quality of assessment is good. All teachers maintain a variety of assessment records for Mathematics including, teacher-devised tasks and tests, results of termly tests, standardised assessment data and notes from observations. Some teachers maintain check lists on the pupils’ mastery of concepts across the curriculum area. Within classes, teachers should make greater use of the outcomes of assessment to inform planning and teaching for pupils at different levels of ability.
- At whole-school level, standardised assessment information is carefully maintained and well utilised to identify pupils for additional supports and for tracking the progress of individual pupils. The potential to use data is not being fully exploited to inform learning targets at a whole-school level for Mathematics. It is recommended that assessment data is utilised further to inform target setting as part of the DEIS process. In addition, there is further scope to use data to inform interventions that will support the cohort of pupils who are challenged by Mathematics.

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

- The quality of school planning, including SSE, in Mathematics is commendable. There has been exemplary engagement with the SSE process which has resulted in SSE reports, school improvement plans and the introduction of a range of programmes and practices which are having a positive impact on teaching and learning in Mathematics.
- The whole-school plan has been developed collaboratively by the staff and is regularly updated as practice evolves. Mathematical content is very well laid out for all class levels and the whole-school plan provides very good guidance for the teaching of mathematics language and skills at the infant and junior level of the school. As the plan is further developed, the school should extend planning for skills development and language for Mathematics to all levels.
- The school has prepared an SSE plan for numeracy and a separate numeracy plan as part of the DEIS planning process. In reviewing both plans, the school should prepare one plan as advised in circular 0039/2016 and 0016/2018. The revised plan should include learning-outcome focused targets for all pupils in a specific aspect of the Mathematics programme and include actions to achieve these targets over a three year period.
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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</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 <strong>outstanding</strong> 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>Good</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 <strong>very good</strong> standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</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>Fair</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>Weak</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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