

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Chuimín agus Caitriona
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Carrowmanagh Oughterard County Galway
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	201990

Date of inspection: 12-12-2019



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agus Scileanna**
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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 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.

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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	12-12-2019
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 Chuimín agus Caitríona is a co-educational primary school located in the town of Oughterard, County Galway. It participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) (Rural) scheme and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Galway. There is an administrative principal, nine mainstream teachers and five special education teachers (SETs). There is also a class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), and 237 pupils enrolled in the school overall.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good, and the whole-school focus on mathematical language is impacting very positively on pupils' learning.
- Pupils' learner experiences are of a very good quality and positive classroom atmospheres, conducive to learning, are created.
- Teaching is very good with exemplary lessons observed, and agreed strategies are implemented consistently.
- Opportunities for pupil talk and discussion were observed in the majority of settings.
- While assessment practices are good overall, there is scope for development.
- Whole-school planning and school self-evaluation (SSE) in Mathematics are very good, with a culture of ongoing improvement and collaboration fostered among staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In a few settings, further opportunities should be provided to promote mathematics talk among pupils giving them opportunities to question, describe and to clarify their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Evidence-based diagnostic assessments should be used to inform targets in numeracy for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and assessment for learning (AfL) strategies should be agreed and consistently implemented.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good. It is evident from observations in all settings that pupils have a positive attitude to Mathematics and are motivated to learn. Pupils who participated in the focus-group discussion reported the enjoyment that they experience when participating in mathematical games. During classroom interactions, almost all pupils responded very well to questioning across the strands. The whole-school focus on mathematical language is impacting very positively on learning. The school has identified the skill of problem-solving as an

area that requires improvement. To this end, it would be worthwhile to develop a whole-school approach to the teaching of problem solving. The presentation of work in copybooks is at a very good standard in most cases. The overall attainments of the pupils in standardised tests are of a very high quality.

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

Pupils' learner experiences are of a very good quality. Interactions with pupils were observed to be caring and supportive. Teachers fostered a positive classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. Pupils' behaviour was highly commendable during the evaluation.

Pupils enjoy frequent opportunities to be active in their learning and to work collaboratively with their peers. They have access to a broad range of mathematical resources and concrete materials to support them in their learning. The school building and grounds are stimulating maths environments and are used for maths trails. Very attractive displays, both in the classrooms and on the corridors, support and celebrate pupils learning. The co-curricular activities organised include projects in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) and LEGO workshops. The school has acquired additional technology to support pupils' learning, and worthwhile plans are in place to progress pupils' engagement in digital learning experiences. The use of mathematics surveys in ascertaining pupils' views promotes their participation and is highly praiseworthy.

The overall quality of teaching is very good with exemplary lessons observed during the course of the evaluation. Teachers place a commendable emphasis on the promotion and application of mathematical skills. Pupils are taught a suitable range of mental mathematics strategies. In addition, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to apply their learning to real-life situations. In a few settings, increased opportunities should be provided to promote mathematics talk among pupils. This would give them an opportunity to question, discuss and to explain their understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils experiencing difficulties receive high-quality in-class support and team teaching based on identified needs and assessment of current levels of attainment. Support for pupils' mathematic learning in the class for pupils with ASD and in support settings is very good. In these settings, the teaching of functional maths skills is developed very appropriately. Teachers are praised for their commitment to continuing professional development (CPD).

The overall quality of assessment is good. Teachers use a broad range of assessment methodologies and monitor pupils' work regularly. Screening and standardised tests are administered annually and the results are collated. Assessment data from standardised tests is analysed thoroughly at whole-school level and meaningfully informs the provision of differentiated learning opportunities for pupils. There is insufficient diagnostic assessment conducted, however. Evidence-based diagnostic assessments should be used to inform targets in numeracy for pupils with SEN. While some highly effective use of AfL strategies was noted during the evaluation, opportunities exist for teachers to share the learning intention and success criteria with pupils on a more consistent basis.

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

School planning, including SSE, is very good. A culture of ongoing improvement and collaboration has been fostered among staff. The school plan provides excellent guidance to teachers in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum. It is highly praiseworthy that the school has developed a booklet of agreed strategies, which is in use in all settings.

Engagement in DEIS action planning is of a very high standard. Using the SSE process, the school has identified clear targets for improvement in pupil learning outcomes. Targeted mathematical language for each class has been developed as part of the SSE process,. It was evident that the focus on mathematical language and terminology is impacting very positively on classroom practice and learner outcomes.

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;