

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection in Mathematics**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Coláiste Éinde
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Threadneedle Road Galway County Galway
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	62981P

**Date of Inspection: 20-09-2018**



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An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **SUBJECT INSPECTION**

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. 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. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

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.

## SUBJECT INSPECTION

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	19 and 20 September 2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during seven class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Coláiste Éinde is a co-educational post-primary school situated in Galway city. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department of Education and Skills' action plan for educational inclusion. There are 786 students enrolled representing a wide range of nationalities. Coláiste Éinde offers the junior cycle programme, Leaving Certificate (LC), Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and an optional Transition Year (TY).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The quality of teaching was good overall with some very good practices observed.
- The overall quality of learning was good with scope to further develop students' active engagement with lesson content.
- A range of good-quality assessment practices was observed; there is scope to further develop students' abilities to peer and self-assess.
- The quality of support for Mathematics provided by senior management and the board of management is very good.
- In most lessons, the standard of individual planning was good or very good; there is scope to improve the quality of collaborative departmental planning.

#### Recommendations

- Active learning opportunities for students should be incorporated more regularly into mathematics lessons and tasks should be suitably differentiated to ensure the more able students are suitably challenged and engaged.
- Assessment strategies should include more purposeful opportunities for students to peer and self-assess their work.
- The mathematics teachers need to work collaboratively to produce a cohesive subject plan which includes well-developed short-term schemes of work and a TY plan for Mathematics.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching was good overall with some very good practices observed. Teachers demonstrated high levels of subject knowledge and enthusiasm for Mathematics and delivered lessons confidently. Students were happy to ask questions and seek clarification in all lessons which was evidence of the safe and affirming learning atmosphere created by the teachers.
- The quality of learning was very good in two lessons, fair in one lesson and good in the remaining lessons. Learning was best where expectations for students' prior knowledge and ability were suitably high and lessons were planned accordingly.
- Students worked purposefully in most lessons but would benefit from more active engagement with lesson content. Well-planned discovery tasks or group activities should be included to engage students purposefully, help foster elements of independent learning and ensure all students are included and challenged appropriately.
- The teacher voice was the most prominent in all lessons. A better balance between student and teacher input would add to the learning experiences of the students and help provide more opportunities for purposeful engagement with lesson content. Students should have opportunities to discuss, explain, justify and present their work in order to experience using keywords and terminology purposefully in context.
- Highly effective questioning was used in some lessons to elicit prior knowledge, differentiate content, include students purposefully, check for understanding and prompt students to think. In other lessons, lower-order questioning predominated. A range of questioning strategies should be used in all lessons.
- In the majority of lessons, students' work was well monitored with evidence of some good-quality formative feedback to guide improvement and to identify and affirm what students are doing well. Further development and implementation of a wider range of assessment strategies, including peer and self-assessment, for all students should be a focus area for improvement.
- In the majority of classrooms, teachers have created stimulating learning environments featuring relevant subject-specific material. The inclusion of a number line in each classroom is recommended.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) was used in all lessons observed. It was used to present content material, to provide notes for students, to transcribe and to display the textbook. There were a few instances of where it was used well to enhance students' learning by providing relevant visual examples and by showing students' work to share good practices and facilitate peer assessment. There is significant scope to expand on the use of ICT to support learning and teachers should individually and collectively explore its potential.
- Support for students with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Students with additional needs are mainly supported in small group settings. Some team teaching has been introduced with efforts to ensure that both teachers involved have mathematics qualifications. Information outlining needs and support strategies are available to teachers on the school's shared drive.

## **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- The quality of support for Mathematics provided by senior management and the board of management is very good. Management encourages and supports teachers' engagement with continuing professional development (CPD) and membership of professional network groups is paid for by the school. The whole-school practice of sharing learning from CPD is commendable.
- Very good ICT facilities are available in all classrooms. Management reported that if requests were made for additional resources to support learning, they would be met favourably.
- Timetabling provision for Mathematics is good and meets subject requirements. TY and final-year students have additional lesson periods and all year groups' lessons are well distributed throughout the week to ensure regular contact with the subject.
- Management have been instrumental in encouraging and supporting the move to extend mixed-ability settings from first year to all junior-cycle mathematics students. From the beginning of second year, students are taught in level specific classes which up until recently were streamed. However, now the practice for junior cycle is that mixed-ability bands are formed and concurrent timetabling allows for students to remain at the highest level for as long as possible. As it was reported to have been a positive move, teachers should consider the practice of mixed-ability banding for senior-cycle students. TY students are taught in mixed-ability classes.
- The practice of teachers working with a range of year-groups is commendable as it helps build capacity among department members. The practice should be extended to facilitate rotation between levels to broaden teachers' pedagogical skillset.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of individual lesson planning was good. Most effective planning was where clear student-centred learning intentions were used to frame the lesson and expectations for students' ability and prior knowledge were suitably high. There was scope to improve planning where the focus was on covering content and where students' prior knowledge and ability were not gauged adequately.
- There is a need to improve the standard of the subject department plan and the levels of formal collaboration which takes place. Schemes of work should be augmented to include clear learning intentions linked to specific methodologies, assessment strategies, relevant resources and online links as well as space for reflective comments to inform future individual and departmental planning. The department has included the new specification for Mathematics in the plan.
- The TY plan for Mathematics is being redeveloped currently. A change to timetabling has resulted in new teachers being assigned to TY Mathematics. This provides an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of previous plans and it is recommended that the department collaborate to produce a cohesive TY plan to serve current and future TY students.
- Collaboration between department members was referred to regularly during the inspection. It was evident that good relationships among department members has resulted in a supportive working environment for teachers with high levels of informal collaboration. It is recommended that more formal collaboration be facilitated with each subject department meeting having teaching, learning and/or assessment as agenda items.

- The department is co-ordinated on a rotational basis, which is good practice, and while the duties are clearly outlined, there is scope for individuals to influence improvements in areas of particular interest.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

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**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 school is committed to:

1. Investigating and evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of introducing mixed ability banding at senior level and taking appropriate actions based on outcome.
2. Addressing the short term and TY planning issue identified in the report.
3. Continuing to prioritise collaborative practice in developing assessment strategies, active methodologies and differentiation skills to support overall teaching and learning.

## 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 of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;