

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Jesus and Mary Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Enniscrone County Sligo
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	65150K

Date of Inspection: 15-05-2019



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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 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.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	14 and 15 May 2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Jesus and Mary Secondary School is a co-educational post-primary school located in Enniscrone, County Sligo operating under the trusteeship of Le Chéile schools trust. It has a current enrolment of 383 students, 75 of whom are in the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) sector which was not evaluated during this inspection. The school offers an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and a range of PLC courses as well as the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching was satisfactory; there is scope to create a better balance between teacher exposition and students' active engagement in lessons.
- The overall quality of learning was satisfactory; this ranged from good to fair with scope to provide students with more opportunities to work collaboratively.
- Assessment practices are satisfactory overall; questioning strategies require improvement and there is a need to provide all students with more written formative feedback on their work.
- Subject provision and whole-school support for Mathematics are good.
- Planning and preparation were good overall; the mathematics department has undergone changes to personnel in the past two years and was in the process of transferring the subject department plan to an online shared drive at the time of the inspection.

Recommendations

- Each lesson should have a clear learning focus and students should be actively and purposefully engaged in their learning, with suitably differentiated tasks provided, for a larger proportion of time in lessons.
- Collaborative learning opportunities should be a regular feature of lessons; tasks should be set that require students to work together meaningfully, and opportunities for students to present, explain, verify and justify their methods and solutions should be fully exploited.
- The mathematics department should focus on improving the quality and range of the assessment strategies used to support learning.

- The subject department plan needs to be developed collaboratively into a comprehensive online document which includes schemes of work to inform and support individual lesson planning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching was satisfactory. Teachers demonstrated good levels of subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. In some instances, there was scope to create a better balance between teacher exposition and students' active engagement with lesson content. Students' over-dependence on teachers' input resulted in a lack of confidence and hesitancy to set about work independently or with peers. Students should have opportunities to work together meaningfully, and opportunities should be fully exploited for them to present, explain, verify and justify their methods and solutions.
- Overall, the quality of learning was satisfactory. Where learning was most successful, the lesson was framed with clear and realistic learning intentions and tasks were planned accordingly. In the most effective case, prior learning was identified and linked effectively to the new content. In some instances, there was scope to improve learner experiences as the lesson focused on covering content and students' engagement was predominantly passive. It is recommended that each lesson has a clear learning focus and students should be engaged actively and purposefully with suitably differentiated tasks for a larger proportion of time in lessons.
- Where the lesson focus is revision and preparation for certificate examinations, skills development should be incorporated also so as to ensure students become adept at working independently and confidently.
- Rapport between teachers and students was very good in most lessons and students' behaviour was exemplary. Learning environments were well presented with a combination of students' work and relevant posters to promote Mathematics and support teaching and learning.
- The quality of assessment is satisfactory overall. In all lessons, questioning was used regularly to include individuals and to check for understanding, but in most instances lower-order responses were required from the students. The inclusion of more open-ended and higher-order questioning, with adequate wait time, would help to provide students with opportunities to use the language of Mathematics purposefully in context, and to provide additional opportunities for teachers to check progress and to differentiate content.
- The level and quality of monitoring work and providing formative written feedback were inconsistent within and across lessons. In some lessons, students' work was well presented and good-quality formative feedback by teachers was noted. However, in many of the copies examined, large amounts of unmonitored work were noted and there was an absence of

regular formative written feedback. The mathematics department should improve its practice around providing formative written feedback on students' work and this work should include setting standards around work presentation and how copies are maintained.

- Students with special educational needs (SEN) are supported by a combination of in-class support, individual support or in small group settings. The SEN department ensures that mainstream teachers are informed of students' additional needs and relevant support strategies through providing whole-staff inputs and ensuring related information is accessible.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole-school support for Mathematics are good. The timetable is made up of a combination of fifty-minute and one-hour lessons. Although this results in students not having exposure to the subject on a daily basis, every effort is made to spread the lessons throughout the week so as to ensure regular contact with Mathematics.
- The school pays for membership of professional networks and requests for resources are met favourably. Management also supports involvement with in-school and external events which enhance students' experiences with Mathematics and related subjects. The teachers' commitment to facilitating and organising these events is commended.
- The whole-school assessment policy is in need of significant improvement. A whole-school assessment policy which is up-to-date and includes a comprehensive range of formative and summative assessment modes will support the work of the mathematics department to improve the overall quality of assessment.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Planning and preparation were good overall. The mathematics department has undergone a number of changes to personnel in the past two years: a long-established teacher, who also acted as the link person for the mathematics department with management, retired and new teachers have joined the team. The plan to rotate the role of co-ordinator is commended as a means to share both the responsibility and expertise within the department.
- Meetings are held formally at least once per term and minutes are maintained. Going forward, the meeting agenda should include discussion of teaching, learning and assessment with a view to sharing best practice and improving overall learner experiences.
- Detailed analysis of certificate examination results are included in the subject plan. It is worth considering this information further when setting specific improvement targets around uptake and attainment.

- At the time of the inspection, the department was in the process of transferring the subject department plan to an online shared drive. This work should be done collaboratively and result in a comprehensive and up-to-date online document which includes schemes of work to inform and support individual lesson planning.

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
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;