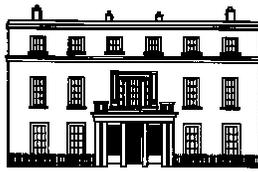


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Mathematics
REPORT
Curragh Post Primary School
The Curragh, County Kildare
Roll number: 706600

Date of inspection: May 9 2016



A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN MATHEMATICS**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	9 and 10 May 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during eight class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers• Discussion with the learning-support team

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from very good to fair.
- Student learning in a number of lessons was negatively impacted by poor student behaviour.
- A number of lessons featured traditional teaching with the textbook as the primary teaching resource.
- The best lessons featured student-centred learning, the effective integration of resources and a rigorous treatment of the lesson content.
- Student compliance with homework completion is mixed, while formal assessment practices in Mathematics are very good
- Management strongly supports the work of the mathematics department.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continuing professional development (CPD) courses addressing classroom management, differentiation and assessment for learning should be provided as soon as possible.
- The teaching resources produced by the Project Maths Development Team and the teaching approaches espoused by Project Maths should be incorporated into all mathematics lessons.
- Ongoing planning in Mathematics should explicitly focus on ensuring that the high-quality teaching and learning evident in some mathematics lessons is universally adopted across the department.
- A review, involving members of the school's student body, of that element of the school's assessment policy dealing with homework should be undertaken.

INTRODUCTION

Curragh Post primary School is a co-educational school operating under the aegis of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in our Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. Its curricular provision includes the Junior Certificate, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. At the time of the evaluation, the school had an enrolment of 168.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching ranged from very good through satisfactory to fair with a small majority of the lessons in the latter two categories.
- The quality of learning was mixed and in some instances was compromised by poor student behaviour. This behaviour led to low-level disruption and disengagement from the lesson content by a significant number of students. In order to address this, CPD courses on managing challenging behaviour, differentiated teaching and assessment for learning should be provided at the earliest opportunity.
- In lessons where there was scope for improvement in both teaching and learning, the teaching approach was traditional with the textbook serving as the primary teaching resource. Consequently there was an overemphasis on teacher input and few, if any, opportunities for students to engage in collaborative or independent learning. It is recommended, therefore, that classroom resources be bolstered by the inclusion of the materials produced by the Project Maths Development Team and that the approach to teaching espoused by Project Maths be adopted as standard across the mathematics department.
- Classroom management, student behaviour and engagement were very good in a number of lessons. These lessons were conducted at a good pace, featured the integration of a range of resources and, most importantly, had clear learning intentions that were rigorously interrogated during the course of the lessons. This approach ensured that the lesson content was accessible to all of the students and that they could engage with it in a meaningful way.
- Future subject department planning in Mathematics should focus explicitly on teaching and learning and how the good practice evident in some lessons is adopted as standard across the department. In the first instance, planning should address common approaches to teaching key topics and identifying teaching strategies that best meet the needs of the students.
- Homework was assigned and corrected in every lesson visited as part of the evaluation. However, student compliance with homework completion was mixed with some students failing to produce homework of any appreciable quality. It is advised, therefore, that the school's assessment policy be reviewed and that the review address how homework can be made more relevant and meaningful for students. Representatives of the school's student body should participate in the review process.
- Formal assessment practices in Mathematics are very good. Common papers, within levels, with agreed marking schemes are prepared for all formal house examinations. An analysis of these examination papers indicated that they are of a good standard and the

style of question models those the students can expect to encounter in the certificate examinations.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Mathematics enjoys very good support from management. The department is very well resourced and the amount of time made available to teach Mathematics on the school's timetable is generous.
- The scheduling of mathematics classes in second and third year should be reviewed and the possibility of concurrent timetabling within each of these years be explored. This would allow for the formation of higher-level class groups in Mathematics at an earlier stage than is currently the case.
- Arrangements for facilitating the transfer of students into first year and establishing their mathematical competencies are good. However, consideration should be given to establishing closer links between the mathematics department in Curragh Post Primary School and the teachers in the primary schools from which the bulk of students transfer. These enhanced links should lead to discussions on how Mathematics teaching and learning occur in both sectors and how the transition process can be more effective in developing the students' mathematical skills and disposition towards Mathematics.
- Learning support in Mathematics is provided during withdrawal from subjects other than Mathematics. Feedback from the learning-support team indicated that these withdrawal groups can be quite large and that other interventions such as team teaching and in-class co-operative support might be more beneficial. The members of the mathematics department are quite open to this suggestion and it is recommended that a move to team teaching in Mathematics take place at the earliest opportunity.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The structures in place to support subject department planning are very good. A co-ordinator is in place and regular, minuted, meetings of the department are held. A subject department plan is in place and reflects the input of all of the departments' members. The plan contains many innovative features with the section on assessment being particularly good.
 - The plan is quite large. Much of it should now be archived and the remainder restructured. Greater emphasis should be placed on teaching and learning in the revised plan and the schemes of work should be written in terms of learning outcomes to reflect the approach adopted in the new syllabus documents.
 - The quality of individual planning for lessons varied and was at its best when the emphasis was placed on student learning rather than curriculum delivery. When the focus was on student learning, a range of interventions was brought to bear to enhance student understanding and student-friendly resources were seamlessly integrated into the lessons. Where there was scope for improvement in lesson planning, the resulting lessons were one-dimensional and student experience of the Mathematics being covered was uninspiring.
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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation. 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.

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