



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics Report

REPORT

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| School name | S N Muire Lourdes |
| School address | Mill Street Tullow Co. Carlow |
| Roll number | 135071 |
| Date of evaluation | 21-09-2022 |
| Date of issue of report | 06/12/2022 |

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* and the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)*. 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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

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| During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted: | |
| <i>Child Protection</i> | <i>Anti-bullying</i> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">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. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the <i>Procedures</i>) since the previous report to the board.3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils. |

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

Curriculum evaluation

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| Date of inspection | 21-09-2022 |
| Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and post-holder for Mathematics• 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 Mhuire Lourdes is an all-girls primary school in Tullow, Co Carlow. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. At the time of the evaluation, there were 249 pupils enrolled in the school. There are ten mainstream classes, four special education teachers (SET) and an administrative principal employed at the school. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of the pupils' learning was good, during classroom observations, the pupils were motivated to learn and enjoyed their lessons.
- Pupils engaged in a wide range of highly effective learning experiences; classroom environments were supportive and secure.
- Teachers' practice was very good, lessons were well structured and differentiated to meet the range of needs within classes.
- School planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) was effective at progressing pupils' learning.
- The teachers and principal are highly commended for their energy and dedication to developing pupil-centred approaches to the provision of Mathematics.

Recommendation

- Teachers should plan and provide regular opportunities for pupils to use mathematical language in lessons, to discuss their learning and to explain and justify their approaches to tasks, in order to further develop pupils' confidence and communication skills in Mathematics.
- The principal, together with the teachers, should develop an agreed approach to assessment of Mathematics which would identify practical ways that assessment records can be used to support discussions with pupils about their learning progress and provide oversight of learning to management.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The overall quality of pupils' learning was good. The pupils presented as motivated learners who enjoyed their learning. During the focus group, pupils reported their enjoyment of lessons particularly when they played games and used concrete materials. Throughout the school, many pupils demonstrated good recall of mathematical facts, procedure and strategies. There was a good range of high-quality work in the pupils' copybooks.

The school had implemented a number of initiatives which highlighted the importance of Mathematics in life, outside of school. During interactions with pupils, it was evident that these initiatives were impacting positively on pupils' enjoyment and understanding of Mathematics.

During classroom observations, pupils in most classes had difficulty in explaining their thinking and using mathematical language to describe their learning. Teachers should plan and provide regular opportunities for pupils to use mathematical language in lessons, to discuss their learning, to explain and justify their approaches to tasks.

2. Supporting pupils' learning: Learner experience and teachers' practice

Overall, learner experiences were very good. Pupils were given opportunities to work collaboratively and independently on a range of learning experiences. Classroom environments were positive and welcoming. During lessons pupils accessed support easily. Pupils in the focus group explained that a support station was available in classrooms, and, pupils could choose to use the table whenever they needed it. This practice of providing pupils with ownership and choice when accessing support is highly praised.

The overall quality of teaching was very good. There was evidence of very good differentiation within lessons. Teachers explained concepts clearly, lessons were well structured and learning intentions were shared with pupils. During the focus group, pupils agreed that their teachers were very good at explaining mathematical concepts to them. In all settings, mathematical language was explicitly identified, taught and displayed.

Oral maths was taught in some classes. It was primarily based on skip counting and tables practice. There is scope to further extend and embed the schools' approach to oral computation in order to develop a consistent, robust practice which can be used at the outset of each mathematics lesson.

The provisions for pupils with additional learning needs in Mathematics was delivered through a range of approaches including withdrawal, station teaching, team-teaching and parallel teaching. Practice was most effective when support teachers and class teachers were planning and teaching an identified group of pupils for a specific purpose.

The quality of assessment was good. Pupil attainment was monitored at class and whole-school level through standardised tests, teacher designed tests and correction of tasks. However, during interactions with pupils they were unsure about their progress in Mathematics. Teachers should develop an agreed approach to the assessment of Mathematics in the school. They should identify practical ways that assessment records can be used to support discussions with pupils on their progress in learning and provide oversight of learning to the in-school management team (ISM).

3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning

The overall quality of school planning, including SSE was good. Teachers' individual planning was very good. Teachers used a learning outcome-based approach to planning and these learning outcomes were differentiated to take account of the range of abilities within classes. There was a clear link between teachers' planning and classroom practice.

There was a contextualised whole-school plan for Mathematics. The ISM acknowledged that this plan needs to be developed to reflect current practices in Mathematics. It was advised that further detail be added to sections on oral mathematics and mathematical language, assessment practices and the teaching of procedures in order to support consistency of approaches across the school.

The teachers and principal are highly commended for their energy and dedication to the pupils in the school. It was evident that they are committed to developing pupil-centred approaches to the provision of Mathematics.

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 | <i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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 | <i>Good</i> 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 | <i>Satisfactory</i> 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 | <i>Fair</i> 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 | <i>Weak</i> 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; |