



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Naomh Carthach
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Ballyfinane Firies Killarney
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	07990F
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	11/03/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	27/05/2024

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 evaluated learning and teaching in Mathematics under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning outcomes
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learning 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 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.

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

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> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The school's current 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

Date of inspection	11/03/2024
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 Naomh Carthach is a rural co-educational primary school situated near the village of Firies, Co. Kerry. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kerry. The staff consisted of two mainstream class teachers and one special education teacher (SET) and at the time of the evaluation there were twenty-five pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics was very good; pupils demonstrated appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding of the concepts and strands taught.
- Highly successful learner experiences were provided for pupils.
- The quality of teaching was very good; planning and preparation was of a high standard and this facilitated effective practice for teaching.
- Highly commendable support was provided in all settings for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
- The quality of assessment was highly effective; pupils experienced peer and self-assessment on a regular basis.
- The quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) in progressing pupils learning was very good.

Recommendations

- To further extend the print-rich mathematical environments of the learning settings, teachers should regularly add new mathematical language and samples of children's own work to classroom displays as well as provide opportunities for pupils to share their learning with the other class setting.
- Pupil voice should be included in the school support plans (SSPs) where appropriate to encourage them to take ownership of their own learning.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics was very good. Pupils presented as motivated learners and displayed positive attitudes towards the subject. They demonstrated appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding of the different concepts and strands taught since the beginning of the year. Pupils' progression in Mathematics was clear. When questioned they answered confidently and could justify and explain their answers using appropriate mathematical language. In the junior setting, pupils could integrate and connect mathematical learning with other activities. In the senior class, pupils could identify the links between Science,

Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and use those links to solve problems.

During the focus group discussion, senior pupils spoke positively about their learning in Mathematics. Pupils reported that they enjoyed partaking in trails and playing mathematical games in the outdoor environment. They described engaging in coding activities, interactive maths games, and utilising hands-on maths resources as stimulating activities. They reported that they would welcome more opportunities to share their mathematical learning with the other class setting as well as displaying their work in the classroom and in the school corridors.

2. Supporting pupils' learning outcomes through learning experiences and teachers' practice

Highly successful learner experiences were provided for pupils in Mathematics. They engaged purposefully in a broad range of meaningful learning activities independently, in pairs, and in groups. Each learning setting had a Mathematics display, and this was observed to scaffold and reinforce pupils' learning. To further extend the print-rich mathematical environments, teachers should regularly add new mathematical language and samples of pupils' own work to classroom displays as well as provide opportunities for pupils to share their learning with the other class setting. Commendably, pupils had opportunities to engage in whole-class and group discussions with teachers and with their peers while working on individual and collaborative tasks. These interactions created a positive and affirming learning environment.

The quality of teaching was very good. Concepts were explained clearly, and teachers used questioning effectively to check for pupils' understanding. In the school's multi-grade setting, learning tasks were differentiated to challenge and support pupils. Teachers' recorded preparation tasks facilitated effective teaching and learning. There was good practice in place for integrating Mathematics with other curricular areas such as Irish and Science. Examples of this were basic computer programming in the junior room and construction projects in the senior classroom. Both activities promoted STEM in the classroom. Teachers provided opportunities for pupils to apply mathematics learning to real-life situations and encouraged pupils to engage in mathematical investigations. While some provision was made for pupils to learn Mathematics through digital devices, more opportunities could be offered for this across the school.

Highly commendable support was provided to pupils with SEN through a combination of in-class support and withdrawal of individuals and groups. There was good quality communication and collaboration between mainstream class teachers and the SET. SSPs were descriptive and identified specific targets for pupils, against which their progress was measured. The plans were regularly reviewed in collaboration with parents. To further enhance this good practice, pupil voice should be included in the SSPs where appropriate to encourage them to take ownership of their own learning.

The quality of assessment in Mathematics was highly commendable. An analysis of whole-school standardised test results was undertaken, and this had informed the provision of support throughout the school. Individual pupil portfolios contained classroom-based assessment tests and observations on how pupils learn. Pupils' work was corrected and monitored carefully by teachers during lessons. Pupils used peer and self-assessment on a regular basis. All teachers compiled records of assessment; these included checklists, class tests and teacher designed tasks.

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

The quality of school planning, including SSE in progressing pupils learning was very good. The whole-school plan for Mathematics was clear, with approaches to problem solving and targeted mathematics language outlined in the plan. The plan was developed collaboratively to provide good guidance on knowledge and skills development. The content of the plan was reflected in teachers' individual preparation for Mathematics and highly effective collaborative planning for pupils with SEN was evident.

School leadership reported that they had already engaged in continuous professional learning regarding the introduction of the Primary Mathematics Curriculum. The schools' current focus for SSE was wellbeing and some progress has been made in this area.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	Provision that is very good is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Ballyfinane NS welcomes this positive evaluation report for Mathematics and are satisfied that the school is in full compliance with practice and procedure, particularly with regard to the mandated requirements for Child Protection and Anti-Bullying. The board accepts the findings which reflect the commitment to teaching and learning that are ongoing at Ballyfinane NS. This report noted highly successful learner experiences, quality teaching and a high standard of planning and preparation. We acknowledge the affirmation of this report of the high standard of practice around teaching and learning that is evident in the school. Also, the quality of assessment, how assessment is utilised on a regular basis and used effectively to provide support for all students. Findings particularly note that Ballyfinane NS was highly commended regarding the support provided for children with special educational needs (SEN) in all classroom settings.

We are content that the inclusive and happy school atmosphere has been acknowledged and highly commended along with the practice that is in place in school planning and for the school self-evaluation focus of wellbeing which supports learning.

The Board of Management is encouraged by this report which recognises and upholds the dedication and commitment of the students, staff, management and school community to educational and the holistic development of pupils at Ballyfinane NS.

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 Board of Management is committed to supporting high standards of teaching and learning at Ballyfinane N.S. The Board of Management will support the school to further extend mathematical language through print rich material in the school environment and will encourage integration between the Junior and Senior rooms whereby learning can be shared in a meaningful way. We will support the school through encouragement of CPD and Maths initiatives and will increase funding to enhancing the school's IT resources in the area of Maths in line with new Primary Maths Curriculum. The Board of Management will ensure pupil voice is enhanced especially in respect of school support plan.