

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Feichín
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Termonfeckin Drogheda Co. Louth
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16208N

Date of inspection: 09-10-2020



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WHAT IS A CURRICULUM EVALUATION?

Curriculum Evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999). 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, 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.

This evaluation was paused due to the school closures arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. While the majority of the inspection activities took place in March 2020, some inspection activity and the feedback meetings were not held until October 2020.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	09-10-2020
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 Feichin is a co-educational primary school operating under the Catholic Archbishop of Armagh. The school has eleven mainstream teachers, three special education teachers and an administrative principal. The school has an enrolment of 285 pupils.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good; pupils speak enthusiastically about their enjoyment of Mathematics and demonstrate commendable awareness of the development of their mathematical skills.
- Pupils' learning experiences are very good; very effective integration of Mathematics with Science and Technology contributes to the quality of their learning experiences.
- The quality of teaching is very good: a whole-school emphasis on the use of concrete materials and mathematical language is noted.
- Assessment practices are good with some examples of very good practices evident; at the time of the inspection, assessment information was not used sufficiently to provide differentiated support for some pupils.
- The quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) is very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The range of assessment data should be used to a greater extent to ensure appropriately differentiated learning opportunities for all pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good. The learner outcomes in the lessons observed ranged from good to very good. Pupils can ably articulate a range of problem-solving strategies. Pupils demonstrate engagement and enjoyment in their learning experiences and participate in group work regularly. Pupils make meaningful and authentic connections between school-based learning and learning that takes place in other contexts.

In the focus group discussion, conducted during the evaluation, pupils demonstrated a keen understanding of the relationship between mathematical skills and other areas of the curriculum, in

particular, Science and Geography. They spoke of their enjoyment in the use of technology as a means of communicating and demonstrating their learning in Mathematics.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE

The learning experiences provided for pupils in Mathematics are of a very high standard. Attractive stimulating learning environments are supportive of learning and celebrate the pupils' achievements in Mathematics. Pupils engage in a wide range of meaningful activities in groups, pairs and individually. Pupils receive regular opportunities to develop their mathematical thinking and to engage in enquiry-based learning. In lessons observed, pupils explored mathematical concepts through playful and active learning methodologies.

The quality of teaching is very good. The teachers' planning and preparation informs effective practice for mathematics teaching and learning. Teachers use a wide range of maths language effectively and are skilful in the use of open-ended questions to elicit pupils' knowledge and deepen understanding.

The quality of assessment is good. Teachers develop pupils' self and peer- assessment skills effectively during lessons. Teachers maintain a variety of assessment records including checklists, teacher designed tasks and tests and standardised assessment data to assess pupils' work and plan for future learning. However, the potential use of this information is not fully realised in developing learning targets for some pupils in Mathematics in order to differentiate teaching and learning appropriately. Diagnostic testing needs to be developed to support the identification of specific targets for pupils with special educational needs.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS' LEARNING

Whole-school planning in Mathematics is very good. The school plan has recently been reviewed. Within the plan, mathematical language and content has been identified and developed incrementally for all levels.

A school self-evaluation report and school improvement plan has been implemented in the area of Mathematics. Staff had identified the skill of problem-solving as an area for improvement. Teachers have participated in continuous professional development to support the development of maths skills through coding, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and problem-solving.

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 Scoil Naomh Feichín is very satisfied with the outcome of the Curriculum Evaluation of teaching & learning in the subject area of Mathematics. The board considers the report to be fair and balanced. The school will now use the findings in the report to inform ongoing school improvement planning in this subject.

The board is also satisfied to read that all requirements related to Child Protection & Safeguarding have been met.

The board wishes to acknowledge the importance of pupil voice during the Curriculum Evaluation. Pupils in the focus group discussion reported how proud they were to represent their peers in discussing their learning in Mathematics.

Finally, the board would like to compliment how the curriculum evaluation process was adapted following the sudden announcement that all schools would close prior to the completion of the inspection. We are very happy that all remaining aspects of the evaluation were completed when our school reopened in autumn 2020.

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 teachers are very happy that the inspectors have stated in the recent Curriculum Evaluation Report that the overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics in our school is very good.

We also note the recommendation that we should consider the use of the assessment data available to a greater extent to ensure appropriately differentiated opportunities for all pupils. This is something that we will attempt to address as a staff over the course of this school year.

We will do this by:

- Adding differentiation in Mathematics to the agenda of our staff meetings.
- Reviewing assessment tools for Mathematics.
- Reviewing how assessment data in Mathematics is used by class teachers.
- Review how differentiation is recorded in Classroom Support Plans.
- Encouraging teachers to consider opportunities for CPD in the area of differentiation.

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	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 very good 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;