

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

**Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics**

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Martinstown N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Killmallock Co Limerick
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	09915B

Date of Evaluation: 16-02-2017



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 evaluated learning and teaching in Mathematics under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning
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 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.

Curriculum Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	16-02-2017
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

Martinstown N.S. is a mainstream, co-educational primary school with a staffing of four mainstream class teachers and one support teacher. Two other teachers, based in neighbouring schools, support pupils with additional learning needs. There are currently eighty-six pupils enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Pupil attainment in Mathematics is of a very high standard.
- Very high quality learning experiences are provided to pupils.
- The overall quality of teaching of Mathematics is of a very high standard.
- A wide range of assessment practices of and for learning is effectively utilised by teachers though there is a need to further analyse the results of standardised tests.
- While the whole-school Mathematics plan is of a good quality, clearer direction is required to ensure that there is a balance in strand coverage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further analysis of the results of standardised tests should be undertaken to inform the organisation of support for pupils experiencing difficulty.
- The school plan should promote a balance of strand coverage in order to facilitate pupil engagement with each strand unit of the Mathematics curriculum on a termly basis.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING IN SUBJECT

The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is of a very high standard. In the lessons observed and in the course of interactions, pupils presented as enthusiastic and highly motivated learners. They have a positive attitude towards their learning and display commendable skills in recalling number facts and previously taught mathematical concepts. Pupils discuss mathematical processes confidently using appropriate mathematical language. They display a praiseworthy ability to clarify their thinking and to question. Pupils apply their acquired knowledge and skills very appropriately when undertaking problem solving activities. There is scope to further develop pupils' higher order thinking skills through the provision of more opportunities for engagement in collaborative problem-solving activities. In a focus-group interview held with pupils, they stated that their teachers make learning in Mathematics

fun and relevant through the use of concrete materials, maths trails and through the provision of activities which facilitate pupils to work in pairs and groups.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING IN MATHEMATICS: LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE

Pupils are very well supported in their learning. The needs of pupils experiencing difficulties in Mathematics are effectively met through a combination of in-class support and withdrawal of groups of pupils for targeted interventions. Teachers were observed to successfully differentiate lesson content and learning activities to meet the varying abilities of these pupils within the multi-class context and in support settings. The needs of the significant number of high achieving pupils should be met by the provision of more challenging material to ensure that their learning is progressed even further.

Pupils in the school are provided with very high quality learning experiences. They are awarded opportunities to work both independently and in groups. Their contributions to lessons are encouraged, affirmed and valued. Teaching resources, including information and communication technologies are effectively utilised to support pupil learning. As part of their engagement in the Junior Enterprise Programme, pupils produced a CD to assist in the learning of tables. This has contributed significantly to enabling pupils to learn key number facts in a very enjoyable manner.

The overall quality of teaching in Mathematics is of a very high standard. Classroom atmospheres are characterised by mutual respect, affirmation and trust. Teachers prepare well for their lessons. High quality long and short-term planning effectively informs their practice. The school is praised for its engagement in collective and collaborative practices in Mathematics. Teacher planning and practice reflect whole-school approaches to the teaching of mathematical language, mental maths and problem solving. Teachers contribute to building of whole-staff capacity by sharing the learning they acquired through their engagement in professional development opportunities, notably in the area of Mata sa Rang.

A wide range of assessment practices of and for learning is effectively utilised by teachers. Pupil progress is monitored and evaluated through the administration of teacher-designed tests and tasks, criterion referenced tests and the administration of standardised tests in Mathematics. The analysis of standardised test results by strand is now recommended. Data generated in this analysis should inform the organisation of support for pupils experiencing difficulties in specific strands of the Mathematics curriculum within the classroom context and in support settings.

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

The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation in Mathematics is of a good to very good standard. The recently reviewed Mathematics plan gives good guidance to teachers in relation to; content to be addressed; approaches and methodologies; agreed whole-school strategies and in the assessment of pupil progress. While care is taken to ensure that pupils experience a broad curriculum in Mathematics, it is now recommended that the school review the balance of strand coverage. This should ensure that pupil learning in discrete strand units is effectively scaffolded enabling them to engage with each strand of the Mathematics curriculum on a termly basis.

The school's engagement in the school self-evaluation process is impacting very positively on pupil learning. Staff meetings are used productively to collaboratively review aspects of teaching and learning, to identify areas in need of development and to improve pupil learning outcomes, experiences and teachers' practice. Under the highly effective leadership of the principal, each teacher is encouraged to play an active part in leading, implementing and monitoring agreed whole-school approaches to improvement in the teaching of mathematics. This practice is highly praised.

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 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;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The board is very satisfied with the curriculum evaluation of Mathematics carried out on 16/2/2017. We are pleased that the findings outline very high quality teaching and learning experiences throughout the school. The school is fully engaged in the School Self-Evaluation process and we will reflect and respond to areas requiring improvement in our school.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The school will analyse standardised test results across all strands from May 2017 onwards. This will assist the school in organising support for pupils experiencing difficulties in each strand.

Our school plan will be reviewed and amended where necessary to provide a more balanced coverage of all strands throughout the school year.