

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics
REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Swinford NS
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Swinford Co Mayo
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19951L

Date of Evaluation: 08-06-2017



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 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.

Curriculum Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	08-06-2017
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

Swinford National School is a co-educational primary school in Swinford, Co. Mayo, under the patronage of the Bishop of Achonry. The school has seven mainstream class teachers, two full-time and three part-time special-education teachers. It also has a unit for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good. Pupils engage enthusiastically in their learning and demonstrate a very high level of competence.
- Work of an exceptionally good quality was observed in the senior pupils' use of coding to devise computer games and to programme drones.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences is very good. Rich mathematical discussion was a feature of most lessons observed.
- Teaching of Mathematics is of a very high standard overall. However, lessons are not sufficiently well differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Learning support is concentrated on meeting needs in relation to literacy with disproportionately less support available to meet numeracy needs. Learning support for Mathematics is provided on a withdrawal basis.
- The school's very good quality engagement in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process has been effective in bringing about measurable improvement in pupils' problem-solving skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need for increased provision in learning support for Mathematics. Team-teaching and in-class support should be provided.
- Lessons in Mathematics need to be better differentiated, with more challenge for the more able pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils learning in Mathematics is very good. Pupils in the school are very highly motivated to learn Mathematics and there is clear evidence of a very high level of engagement in collaborative mathematical tasks and activities in most settings. This very good practice should now be extended throughout the school. During the focus group discussion with pupils, they demonstrated a clear understanding of the value of Mathematics in their lives, now and in the future. Pupils responded very well to questioning in Mathematics during the evaluation. They also demonstrated a high degree of comfort in asking questions and in seeking clarification during lessons.

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

The quality of pupils learning experiences is very good. A supportive learning environment where all pupil responses are valued, has been created. A strong emphasis on talk and discussion was a feature of all lessons observed and mental mathematics was effectively taught in all settings. Pupils are provided with opportunities to present their work in mathematics to their parents and to their peers. Pupils in senior classes have had the opportunity to write their own coding programmes to produce pupil-devised games and to write codes that activate and steer drones and robots. This very effective application of mathematical reasoning to real life is highly commended.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. All teachers are very well prepared to teach and provide attractive resources which are effectively used. There is a strong focus on developing skills and concepts. Mathematical language is taught in a systematic and effective manner, and pupils are encouraged to use specific terminology correctly. The development of mathematical logs would further consolidate this good work. Some teachers make very effective use of information and communication technology to enhance their practice. Specialist supports and materials are very effectively used in the unit for pupils with ASD.

The division of learning support between literacy and numeracy needs to be reviewed. Limited learning support for Mathematics is currently provided. The existing dependence on withdrawal needs further consideration. Team-teaching and more in-class support should be developed.

The quality of assessment in Mathematics is very good. The results of standardised tests are analysed to identify areas for improvement. Teachers regularly devise tests to monitor pupils' progress and useful records are carefully maintained. This data should now be used to provide better differentiation of the mathematics programme and in particular, to provide more challenge for the more able pupils.

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

The quality of whole school planning is very good. The school plan for Mathematics is useful and provides clear guidance for teachers on specific approaches to be used.

SSE in Mathematics has focused on developing pupils' problem-solving skills and has been effective in enhancing provision. All teachers have engaged in implementing the agreed strategies for

improvement. The implementation has been carefully monitored and the clearly defined targets have been reached. This very effective practice is highly commended.

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 and staff of Swinford National School acknowledge the findings of the in-depth Curriculum Evaluation of Mathematics. The board is delighted that the children's enthusiastic engagement in collaborative mathematical tasks and activities together with their high level of motivation to learn Mathematics was recognised. The board members note this report's affirmation of the children's effective application of mathematical reasoning to real life situations. The board acclaims the exceptionally good quality work which was observed in the senior pupils' use of computer coding. The board commends the finding of the effective use of specialist mathematical supports and materials in the unit for pupils with ASD. The board members acknowledge the quality of assessment in mathematics as outlined in the report.

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 will give careful consideration to the recommendations of the inspectorate. The provision of learning support teaching for Mathematics has been increased and this includes allocation for in class support. The recommendation to further differentiate lessons in Mathematics will be addressed with greater emphasis on providing challenge for the more able pupils.

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 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;