



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics Report

## REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil An Chlochair
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Dublin Road Kilbeggan Co. Westmeath
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20063M
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	07/03/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	13/05/2024

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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)* 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 inspectors 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

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.

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.

## 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"><li>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.</li><li>2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.</li><li>3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li><li>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.</li></ol>

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

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# Curriculum evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	07/03/2024
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Pupil focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

## School context

Scoil An Chlochair is a co-educational, primary school situated in Kilbeggan, County Westmeath. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. It caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class. At the time of the evaluation, the school had an administrative principal, nine mainstream class teachers, one special class teacher, and five special education teachers, one of whom was based in another school. There were 226 pupils enrolled.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes was good and pupils demonstrated a commendable understanding of the importance of mathematics in real-life situations.
- Learner experiences were of a good quality. Pupils used an appropriate range of mathematical resources and they engaged in appropriately playful and engaging learning activities.
- The quality of teaching was very good. Teachers were very effective communicators who explained new concepts clearly and placed explicit emphasis on promoting mathematical language.
- Whole-school planning and engagement in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process were of a very good quality.

### Recommendations

- As pupils' active participation in developing their conceptual understandings had scope to be enhanced, teachers should provide pupils with additional opportunities to collaborate, to reason mathematically and to apply their newly-acquired learning and skills during lessons.
- Leaders and teachers should extend their methods of consultation with pupils to place greater emphasis on garnering pupils' perspectives about their learning experiences to inform the review and development of whole-school planning.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

### 1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning was good. Pupils demonstrated competent ability to recall and define terminology and facts. They displayed commendable understanding of how various mathematical processes applied to real-life scenarios. Pupils took great pride in how they presented their work neatly in their copybooks; the layout of their work was exemplary.

Pupils' knowledge, understanding and application of skills across the strands of the mathematics curriculum were of a good quality overall, as evidenced in interactions with pupils, application of learning during lessons, and the results of assessments. The majority of pupils

were enthusiastic learners who had positive attitudes towards Mathematics. During some learning activities, opportunities existed to raise the level of pupils' participation in actively developing their conceptual understandings in Mathematics. To this end, teachers should provide pupils with additional opportunities to collaborate, to reason mathematically and to practise and apply their newly-acquired learning and skills during lessons.

Some very effective learning was underway in the school in exploiting the opportunities that Mathematics provides to be creative through pupil engagement with Lego and robotics. Overall, there was scope for development in pupils' more regular use of digital technologies during mathematics lessons to investigate, record and present their learning. Pupils successfully communicated their learning in a range of ways including verbal presentations, diagrams, and use of concrete materials. There was variance in pupils' awareness of strategies to support them in working through mathematical problems, in particular, when they experienced challenge in their learning. In some settings, pupils used maths journals where they logged key concepts and strategies to help them in their learning. There is scope to embed this practice as pupils move through the school to support progression and consolidation of learning.

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

The quality of learner experiences was good. Pupils related very well to each other and to their teachers demonstrating positive, respectful relationships conducive to learning. Pupils were provided with purposeful learning experiences which were playful and engaging. They had access to a suitable range of mathematical resources and games to support and consolidate their learning. Pupils had recently experienced Mathematics as a central component of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-based learning. Worthwhile plans were in place to extend this commendable practice across the school. In the focus-group discussion, pupils reported that teacher explanations helped them to learn effectively. They demonstrated high levels of positivity toward learning about robotics. They expressed interest in having more frequent opportunities to collaborate with their peers and to use digital technologies during lessons, and to undertake maths trails on a more regular basis.

The quality of teachers' practice was very good. Overall, teachers demonstrated very effective pedagogical knowledge in Mathematics. They shared learning objectives with pupils at the outset of lessons and provided frequent opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning. Teachers and special education teachers used a broad range of methods to assess pupils' learning, including objective-based assessments and diagnostic tests, where relevant. In the main, they used assessment data purposefully to inform programmes of learning, targeted interventions and the provision of developmental feedback to pupils. In a few instances, teachers' monitoring of pupils' skills development required closer attention to support the next steps in their learning. Through meaningful collaboration, teachers had prioritised problem-solving and multiplication as areas for development in pupils' learning. Teachers willingly shared their expertise to enrich their collective practice.

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

The quality of school planning in progressing pupils' learning was very good. The in-school leadership team capably led teaching and learning, with effective procedures for collaboration, communication and the sharing of professional learning. The school demonstrated very good engagement in the SSE process with skilful data gathering and analysis of evidence to promote wellbeing and improvement planning in Mathematics. Targets and actions were meaningfully reflected in learner experiences and teachers' practice. This resulted in successful outcomes, including whole-school approaches to teaching mathematical language and the use of portfolios to support progression in pupils' learning. When evaluating the impact of improvement initiatives on pupils' learning, leaders should engage with pupils to garner their perspectives about their learning experiences and use this information to inform future school planning.

Leaders were proactively planning for the implementation of curriculum changes, with meaningful emphasis on ensuring that playfulness, cognitively challenging tasks and promoting maths talk are central components of teachers' pedagogical practice.

## 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
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Provision that is excellent</b> 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
<b>Very good</b>	<b>Provision that is very good</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Provision that is good</b> 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
<b>Requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b> 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
<b>Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b> 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**

## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The quality of pupil's learning outcomes and learner experiences were found to be of a good quality in Scoil an Chlochair across all classes in the school. The children were found to be engaged in playful learning activities and demonstrated commendable understanding of the importance of maths in real-life situations. As a school we always try to ensure the children are learning in a fun and engaging way across all curriculum areas.

The quality of teaching in the school was found to be very good. We in Scoil an Chlochair agree with this statement entirely as the dedication, enthusiasm and motivation shown by every teacher on a daily basis is truly remarkable.

Whole-school planning and engagement in the SSE process were of a very good quality. The ISM team in collaboration with all class teachers are very dedicated to the process of planning across all curricular areas.

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