An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Mhuire NS
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Lacken Ballinagh Co. Cavan
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	17479D
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	11/02/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	11/02/2025

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999),* the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)* and the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum.* 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.

Included in this curriculum evaluation report is a student-friendly page that provides information for the children/young people in your school about the inspection that occurred recently. It outlines for them some of the main findings and recommendations.

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

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) 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.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	11/02/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Discussion with principal and teachers • Review of relevant documents • Pupil focus-group interview	• Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal and teachers

School context

Scoil Mhuire NS is a rural, co-educational primary school, which caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class situated in Lacken, Co. Cavan. It operates under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kilmore. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan, which provides additional resources to identified schools to assist them in reducing barriers to children and young people reaching their potential. At the time of the evaluation, there were 102 pupils enrolled in the school. The school staff comprises of four mainstream class teachers, one special education teacher who also serves as teaching principal. The school has access to a special education teacher shared with another school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning was very good with pupils demonstrating commendable recall of recently taught concepts, language and procedures.
- Pupils' learning experiences were of a very high quality.
- Teaching was of a very good standard overall.
- The quality of school planning was very good; the school improvement plan had impacted positively on pupils' learning and teachers' practice.
- School leadership was observed to be very committed to overseeing the development and promotion of teaching and learning in Mathematics.

Recommendations

- In order to inform the next steps in teaching and learning and to optimise the progress of all pupils, school leaders and teachers should review and agree a cohesive whole-school approach to assessment and select learning outcomes aligned to the curriculum for pupils in each class in the school's multi-grade context.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics very was very good. Pupils enjoyed their learning, and they were motivated to complete tasks provided by their teachers. The majority of pupils made connections between their learning and the wider world. Pupils recited mathematical rhymes, choral counting and songs enthusiastically and explored topics in the strands of *Number, Measure* and *Shape and Space*. They demonstrated very good listening skills and were able to work effectively individually, in pairs and in small groups. During interactions with the inspector, pupils could estimate, recall mathematical terms and ably performed procedures using mathematical language. They could effectively explain words associated with measurement, time, shape and fractions. In some settings, pupils were engaged purposefully in differentiated curriculum-based and collaborative learning activities. This very good practice should be extended across the school to optimise learner outcomes for all pupils in the multi-grade setting.

During the evaluation, pupils achieved the learning outcomes in the lessons observed. While assessment information was gathered from sources including teaching observations, questioning and standardised tests, teachers used a limited range of assessment approaches to monitor and ensure the pupils' ongoing learning and progress in Mathematics. All teachers should review and agree a cohesive whole-school approach to assessment to assist them in meaningfully differentiating content and activities to cater for the varying needs and abilities of the pupils in each class in the multi-grade setting.

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

Pupils' learning experiences were of a very good quality. Pupils engaged in hands-on and playful learning activities, which enabled them to independently investigate, explore and make choices about their learning. They used a range of mathematics resources and manipulatives to support their learning. Teachers ensured that the mathematical language relevant to lessons was displayed in classrooms and that pupils were enabled to identify Mathematics in their environment. Pupils shared their ideas, engaged in rich discussions about their learning, and were successfully supported by their teachers to reflect on and extend their thinking.

In the focus group conducted as part of the evaluation, pupils commented on how a variety of interactive games, digital learning technology, and puzzles made their learning interesting and fun. Pupils appreciated that teachers and school leaders had designated a space in the school dedicated to the area of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) learning. Pupils enthusiastically identified that this space enabled them to share and explore their knowledge and understanding of Mathematics.

Teaching was of a very good standard overall. Classroom management was effective with positive interactions between teachers and pupils observed during lessons. Teachers prepared structured lessons, clearly shared the focus for new learning and provided pupils with opportunities to recall prior learning from the current topic. Where very effective practice was observed, teachers skilfully cultivated a culture of curiosity with open-ended questioning techniques, allowing time for sense-making and setting high-interest mathematical tasks. It was very effective that in some instances, teachers delivered lessons in the designated maths area where pupils were enabled to creatively explore and experiment with mathematical ideas. Special education teachers and mainstream class teachers collaborated very effectively to ensure that pupils in receipt of additional support had opportunities to achieve their specific learning targets in small groups, on topics which aligned to their mathematics lessons in the mainstream setting.

All teachers used a range of appropriate methodologies to teach Mathematics, including group work, paired work and collaborative discovery-based learning activities. Lessons were generally well structured and paced. In some instances, teachers did not select and identify relevant learning outcomes from the curriculum. To ensure the pupils' progression in their learning, all teachers should ensure that lessons and activities in Mathematics are more closely aligned to the curriculum and contextualised to the pupils' needs and abilities.

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

The effectiveness of school planning, including the school DEIS improvement plan, in progressing pupils' learning, was very good. Whole-school planning in Mathematics was under review at the time of the evaluation. The school improvement plan supported the pupils' learning in Mathematics and the school had identified areas for improvement.

The targets in the school's current mathematics plan were specific and appropriate. The school had identified the area of problem-solving as an area for improvement and evidence noted during the evaluation demonstrated that the current plan was positively impacting on teaching and learning in Mathematics. There were recent changes in school leadership and staff. While teachers have had opportunities to participate in professional learning on the Primary Mathematics Curriculum, formalised in-school procedures to promote teachers' collective understanding and sharing of expertise in planning for and implementing the Primary Mathematics Curriculum is encouraged.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of Scoil Mhuire about their learning in Mathematics
Date of inspection: 11/02/2025

Introduction

Your school had an inspection of Mathematics recently. This page for pupils describes what the inspector found and gives ideas about what the school should do to make learning better.

What did the inspector do during the visit?

The inspector visited classrooms and talked to teachers and pupils about the work they were doing. An inspector also met with a focus group of pupils to talk to them about their learning.

What did the inspector find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Teachers were very helpful to pupils when they needed support with their learning.
- Pupils enjoyed games, puzzles, practising Mathematics, and learning about new things in Mathematics especially in the STEAM room.
- Classroom displays helped pupils remember Mathematics they had learned.

What the inspector said the school should do to make learning better

- Teachers should keep track of pupils' progress in Mathematics through the year and make sure that tasks are not too easy or too difficult for pupils.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to pupils who took part in the focus group.

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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board welcomes this report and accepts it. We would like to acknowledge the courtesy shown by the Inspector in undertaking the inspection and look forward to implementing the recommendations.

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

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