

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Mathematics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Kildare Town Educate Together National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Melitta Road Kildare Town
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20403K

Date of inspection: 25-05-2018



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agus Scileanna**
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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 inspectors 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 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.

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.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	25-05-2018
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

Kildare Town Educate Together National School is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of Educate Together. The school has grown significantly in recent years, and at the time of the evaluation there were 317 pupils enrolled. The staff allocation for the current school year is a principal, twelve mainstream class teachers, and four special education posts. In addition, there are two special classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a sample of Mathematics lessons, including eight mainstream class settings, two support-teaching settings and two special classes.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good.
- The overall quality of teaching in Mathematics is very high.
- While assessment practices overall are commendable, there is scope to further refine the school's approaches to monitoring pupils' learning in Mathematics.
- Teachers' collaborative practice is highly commendable.
- Whole-school planning for Mathematics is good overall, with scope for further development evident.
- Currently, a special education teacher is deployed in a mainstream classroom setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should assess all pupils' learning outcomes as each area of the curriculum is completed during the course of the school year.
- The whole-school plan should be reviewed so that it gives comprehensive guidance to all aspects of teachers' practice in Mathematics.
- All additional teaching resources allocated to the school for pupils with special educational needs should be correctly deployed as a matter of priority in compliance with Circular 13/2017.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning is very good. In all settings observed, pupils demonstrate very high levels of engagement in learning. They communicate various aspects of their learning in Mathematics confidently. This is evident, not only through the interactions between teachers and pupils observed in lessons during the evaluation, but also through the willingness of the pupils to share their learning with the inspection team. A very high level of positivity and curiosity in relation to learning Mathematics is inculcated in the pupils. They have a very good understanding of mathematical concepts and consistently use their reasoning skills in making connections between these concepts. An analysis of standardised test results indicates ongoing improvements in the overall achievement levels of pupils in Mathematics.

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

The quality of the learning experiences provided for the pupils is very high. A wide variety of resources and activities is used very effectively to support learning in Mathematics. In most settings, activities were effectively linked to the core learning intention of the lesson. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities during lessons to talk about the various aspects of their current and past learning in Mathematics. Links between current learning in Mathematics and the pupils' real-life experience are consistently established.

The quality of teaching in Mathematics is very good overall. In almost all of the settings observed, teaching is very well structured, appropriately paced and sufficiently differentiated for the range of learners. Teaching of core concepts is highly effective and is marked by regular consolidation of key learning, along with provision of opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively during well-organised group tasks. During the focus-group interview, pupils consistently expressed very high levels of satisfaction regarding the quality of their learning experiences in Mathematics. The effective use of teachers' questioning techniques facilitates pupils' deeper engagement with mathematical concepts. Teachers' individual planning is of a good quality overall, and in nearly all settings, includes provision for the teaching of key mathematical language, along with appropriate differentiation for the range of learning needs. Teachers' collaborative practice is at a very high level.

Support for pupils with additional learning needs in Mathematics is of a very good quality overall. A range of interventions is in place, including in-class support and withdrawal in small groups for more intensive support. To further enhance the effective model of in-class support for Mathematics, the team should ensure that all activities provided are sufficiently challenging and that assessment is more focused on pupil learning outcomes. The school's deployment of a special education teacher in a mainstream setting should cease as per Circular 13/2017.

Provision for Mathematics in the special classes is of a high quality. Very positive and supportive teaching interactions were observed. The team should ensure that there is a consistent approach to planning in these settings. Weekly planning is advised as per the *Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2017)* in order to support and assess the incremental learning of the pupils.

The quality of assessment is commendable overall. A range of assessment strategies is evident in classroom settings including standardised testing, teacher-designed tests, seasonal checklists and profiles of pupils' work. In order to build a richer profile of each pupil's strengths and needs in Mathematics, teachers are advised to assess pupils' learning outcomes more regularly as each area of the curriculum is completed during the course of the school year.

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

The overall effectiveness of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning is good. The whole-school plan for Mathematics gives good overall guidance to teachers' practice regarding agreed teaching approaches and methodologies. These, in turn, are evident in teachers' classroom practice. The further contextualisation of the whole-school plan is now advised. To this end, the school should ensure the inclusion of all in-class mathematics' interventions which are currently implemented in the school. In addition, the inclusion of agreed teaching approaches for mathematical operations, exemplars of existing good practice in the teaching of Mathematics, and the clearer documentation of agreed approaches to a wider range of assessment strategies are advised.

The school has re-engaged with the SSE process and a revised plan for Mathematics is impacting positively on teachers' classroom practice and on pupils' learning experiences.

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 in 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 of Management of Kildare Town Educate Together NS welcomes this very positive report. Two aspects of the report stood out for us; the best possible result for children's learning and for the teaching of maths in the school. The board are very pleased with the findings and believe that it accurately reflects the professionalism, hard work and dedication of the staff. We are also thrilled that in the children's focus group they showed a high level of satisfaction regarding the quality of their own learning experiences. Overall the board is happy that the hard work of the staff and children has been recognised.

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 findings and recommendations of the report have been noted and will be used as the basis for future development. The staff have already started to create school templates to enhance assessment of all areas in maths.

All additional teaching resources allocated to the school have been correctly deployed.

We will continue to strive, as always, to provide the highest quality teaching and learning in our classrooms and welcome all the feedback received.