



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics Report

## REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Dunboyne Junior N S
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Station Road Dunboyne Co. Meath
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20032B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	16/05/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	18/09/2024

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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 inspector(s) 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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>	16/05/2024
<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

Dunboyne Junior National School is a co-educational, primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Meath. The school caters for pupils from junior infants to second class. At the time of the evaluation, the school had an administrative principal, eighteen mainstream class teachers, one special class teacher, and five special education teaching posts. There were 453 pupils enrolled. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a sample of settings.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes was very good and pupils displayed keen awareness of connections between and across the strands of the mathematics curriculum.
- Learner experiences were of a very good quality. Pupils were provided with an impressive range of mathematical resources, and they actively engaged in playful and collaborative learning.
- The quality of teaching was very good. Teachers' preparation for their lessons was informed by their knowledge of the pupils, the curriculum and pedagogy.
- Whole-school planning and engagement in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process were of a very good quality.

### Recommendations

- To deepen pupils' insight as to how they see themselves as learners, teachers should enable pupils to use maths journals to record their independent work and to support them in reflecting on their progress and development in mathematics learning over time.
- To further promote pupil-led maths talk, teachers should provide more opportunities for pupils to express their thinking, to reason, and to justify their approaches.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

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

The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils had very positive attitudes towards their learning and were highly motivated. They demonstrated very good knowledge, understanding and application of skills between and across the strands of the mathematics curriculum. Pupils' sense of *Number* was developed very effectively. Pupils displayed very high levels of competence in their ability to recall and define terminology and facts and they capably carried out computational procedures. They showed commendable understanding of how various mathematical processes applied to real-life situations.

Noteworthy progression was evident in pupils' learning outcomes in *Measures*. Teachers had made concerted efforts to provide pupils with enquiry-based learning to deepen their understanding and application of skills in *Measures*. This included pupils' engagement in hands-

on, investigative learning during lessons and the assignment of homework tasks specifically focused on developing pupils' practical application of *Measures* to their everyday lives.

Pupils demonstrated keen awareness of the importance of reasoning in Mathematics, and they capably explained that there are several ways to solve problems. Where relevant, pupils made very effective use of anchor charts to support them in expressing and communicating their thinking when asked to explain and justify their approaches using appropriate mathematical language. In some settings, opportunities existed for pupils to extend the means of recording their independent work to assist them in having a deeper insight as to how they see themselves as learners of Mathematics. To this end, teachers should enable pupils to use maths journals to record their independent work and to support them in reflecting on their progress and development in mathematics learning over time.

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

The quality of learner experiences was very good. Pupils were provided with appropriately playful and engaging learning activities, and they engaged actively in both independent and collaborative learning tasks. Pupils had access to an impressive range of mathematical resources to support them in developing their conceptual understanding and skills. During interaction with pupils, they displayed very positive dispositions towards their learning in Mathematics as a central component of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-based learning. They capably explained the skills they had developed from participating in playful projects and innovative workshops. They expressed that these experiences promoted their problem-solving skills and creativity, and their ability to work collaboratively. To build on these very effective learning experiences, teachers should consider how best to incrementally develop pupils' skills as they engage with digital learning technologies during lessons.

Teachers' practice was of a very good quality. Teachers had high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. They shared their new professional learning on an ongoing basis to enrich their collective practice. Teachers' preparation for lessons was informed by their knowledge of the pupils, the curriculum and pedagogy. They were very skilful in modelling strategies, allowing for emerging learning opportunities and in providing elements of choice for pupils. In most lessons, teacher facilitated a very effective balance between teacher-directed and pupil-led maths talk. To further promote pupil-led maths talk, teachers should provide more opportunities for pupils to express their thinking, to reason, and to justify their approaches. This would benefit pupils in making sense of and critiquing their own ideas and those of others.

Teachers and special education teachers used intuitive assessment, planned interactions and assessment events to gain a comprehensive picture of pupils' progress and achievements and to plan for the next steps in learning. They adapted teaching approaches and learning content very effectively to support pupils with varying abilities. In general, teachers provided purposeful, formative feedback and used well-crafted, probing questions to extend pupils' thinking and understandings. In some settings, the monitoring of pupils' skills development required closer attention to optimise pupil attainment of curriculum-based learning outcomes.

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

The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was very good. Self-evaluation procedures were well established in the school and teachers demonstrated commitment to school improvement. Targets and actions were meaningfully reflected in learner experiences and teachers' practice. This resulted in successful outcomes, including whole-school approaches to the teaching of problem-solving and mathematical language, and the introduction of digital assessment portfolios in infant classes to support progression in learning.

The recently reviewed whole-school mathematics plan provided detailed guidance on many aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. Appendices to the plan, on approaches such as additional and subtraction with renaming, were shared with parents. This supported pupils' learning in promoting parents' awareness of the methods and language used by teachers to explain new mathematical concepts. School leaders are commended for proactively planning for the implementation of curriculum changes, with meaningful emphasis on fostering productive disposition, promoting playfulness, and 'low threshold, high ceiling tasks' as central features of pedagogy to enrich learner outcomes and experiences.