



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics Report

## REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Claregalway Educate Together National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Lakeview Claregalway County Galway
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20211B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	23-11-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	07/02/2023

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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
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.

## 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> and this policy is reviewed annually.</li><li>2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the <i>Procedures</i>) since the previous report to the board.</li><li>3. The school's 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>Dates of inspection</b>	22-11-2022 and 23-11-2022
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and deputy principal</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

Claregalway Educate Together National School is a co-educational primary school located in Claregalway, county Galway. The school operates under the patronage of Educate Together and participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion. The school has a recently appointed administrative principal, eight mainstream class teachers, two special class teachers for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) and three special education teachers (SETs). A SET based in another school works on a part-time basis in the school. There were 220 pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations

### Findings

- The overall quality of learning in Mathematics was very good; almost all pupils displayed very positive attitudes to Mathematics.
- Pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics were of a very high quality, overall.
- The overall quality of teaching was good, with elements of very good practice observed during the evaluation.
- School planning was very effective in progressing pupils' learning in Mathematics.
- There was evidence of a highly inclusive, respectful, positive culture in the school; pupils' opinions are sought and valued.

### Recommendations

- All teachers should ensure that lessons in Mathematics provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils.
- Teachers should make greater use of problem-solving activities in lessons and provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion on problem-solving strategies.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

### 1. The quality of pupils' learning

Overall, pupils' learning in Mathematics was of a very high quality. In the lessons observed, there was evidence that most pupils were enjoying their learning and were motivated to learn. Almost all pupils displayed very positive attitudes to Mathematics. The learner outcomes in the lessons observed were very good overall.

Pupils were observed using appropriate mathematical language in a way that demonstrated understanding. The majority of pupils could share their learning in Mathematics and explain and justify their answers and strategies. It was evident from interaction with pupils that their mathematical skills, including estimation, measuring, recording and discussion, had been developed effectively. Almost all pupils demonstrated very good collaborative skills in the

lessons observed. During classroom interactions, the majority of pupils demonstrated very good conceptual understanding across the strands of the curriculum. Assessment data indicated that most pupils were making good progress in their learning. The majority of copybooks were well presented and effectively organised.

## 2. Supporting pupils' learning: learner experiences and teachers' practice

Overall, the quality of pupils' learner experiences was very good. In all lessons observed, pupils were actively engaged in activities to support the achievement of the intended learner outcomes. Pupils used concrete materials in almost all lessons. In some settings, information and communications technologies were used effectively to support pupils' learning. All pupils had opportunities to talk and share their learning during lessons and experienced positive interactions with their teachers and peers. Pupils' opinions were valued and welcomed. The pupils in the focus group reported that they enjoyed active learning, the use of games and collaborative learning. The integration of pupils from the special class into mainstream classes during lessons in Mathematics was highly commendable.

A range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities supported pupils' learning in Mathematics. These included *Lego Wedo*, coding and activities organised for Maths Week and Science Week. Consideration should be given to supporting the further development of pupils' mathematical skills through enquiry-based learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM). There was photographic evidence of pupils learning in the outdoor environment. High-quality mathematical trails have been developed by the school and there is scope to use these more regularly.

The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good, with elements of very good practice. All teachers were well prepared for lessons and shared the intended learner outcomes with pupils. Lessons had a clear focus and good structure and pace.

Story was used very effectively in a few lessons to introduce topics. All teachers modelled the use of mathematical language effectively. In most of the lessons observed, teachers enabled the pupils to make useful connections between lesson content and real-life situations. While all teachers used questioning effectively, there was scope to extend and challenge pupils' thinking in the majority of settings. Where very good practice was observed, pupils had opportunities to engage with the process of problem-solving and to discuss problem-solving strategies. This should form part of teachers' practice in all lessons in Mathematics. During the lessons observed, most learning activities were not appropriately challenging for pupils of high ability. Teachers should ensure that learning activities are appropriately challenging for all pupils.

Miniature whiteboards were used very effectively to support pupil engagement and to monitor learning. Displays in Mathematics were in evidence in all classrooms. In a few settings they were used very effectively to scaffold pupils' learning. This practice should be extended to all settings.

Support for pupils with special educational needs was provided effectively through in-class and small-group models of support. The National Educational Psychological Service's (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* was implemented effectively. There was evidence of very high levels of collaboration between mainstream class teachers and SETs.

Teachers have engaged in a range of continuing professional development (CPD) in Mathematics. The sharing of this learning among staff members was highly commendable. Teachers should now consider further CPD on evidence-based initiatives to support teaching and learning in Mathematics.

The overall quality of assessment was good. A wide range of assessment-of-learning (AoL) strategies was evident, including tests, checklists, tasks and teachers' recorded observations. Some assessment-for-learning (AfL) strategies were observed. All teachers should ensure that pupils are supported more effectively in reflecting on their own learning in Mathematics.

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

There was evidence that school planning, including SSE, was very effective in progressing pupils' learning. The school plan had been reviewed collaboratively by staff and provided very good guidance to teachers on curriculum implementation in Mathematics.

At the time of the evaluation, the school was using the SSE process to develop its DEIS action plan.

# **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 of Claregalway Educate Together National School welcome the findings of the inspection report and, in particular, its affirmation of the high quality teaching and learning observed in the school.

The Board is very pleased that the Inspectorate has noted the prevailing culture of respect, inclusivity and the centrality of pupil voice.

### **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 and staff will give careful consideration to the recommendations of the Inspectorate. The school will now use the findings in the report to inform ongoing school improvement planning in Mathematics.

## 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	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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	<i>Good</i> 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	<i>Satisfactory</i> 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	<i>Fair</i> 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	<i>Weak</i> 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;