

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Curriculum Evaluation**  
**Mathematics**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Malahide Road Dublin 17
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	20445D

**Date of inspection: 10-11-2017**



## **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 inspector(s) 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 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.

## Curriculum Evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	10-11-2017
<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>• Observation of teaching and learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together National School is an urban co-educational primary school, with developing school status, under the patronage of Educate Together. The school caters for 148 pupils currently from junior infants to second class. Due to the developing status of the school, a growth in class levels is a feature of school life.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Overall, pupils' learning in Mathematics is of a very high standard; enquiry-based learning could be developed more.
- Pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics are very good with very effective provision for early mathematical activities.
- All pupils are supported in their learning through engagement with differentiated activities in small group stations.
- Overall, teaching is of a very high standard with some exemplary team teaching observed.
- Overall, the quality of assessment is good; however, teacher observations are not linked sufficiently to the differentiated objectives underpinning pupils' learning.
- Whole-school and teachers' collaborative planning for Mathematics are of a very good standard.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further opportunities for pupils to engage in open-ended and enquiry based mathematical learning experiences are needed to further enhance learning.
- There is need to link teachers' observations directly to the differentiated learning objectives identified in team teaching and in whole-class teaching.

### DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

Overall, pupils' learning in Mathematics is of a very high standard. During the evaluation, pupils were observed to enjoy their learning greatly and were highly motivated to learn. There is clear evidence of progression in the learning outcomes of the pupils as they move from class level to class level. At this point, due to the school's developing status, there is one year of standardised test data available, and results indicate that pupils are achieving very well. Their knowledge, skills and understanding across all strand areas reflect, and at times surpass, the appropriate learning

outcomes, as set out in the *Primary School Curriculum*. Consequently, pupils are enabled to use this knowledge and understanding competently and confidently when engaging in a very good range of active learning experiences.

Early mathematical activities are a very effective feature of pupils' learning experiences. Pupils count, sort and classify manipulatives very well, leading to a very good understanding of number concepts. At other class levels, number concepts and operations are very well developed. They have regular opportunities also to engage in a very good range of learning activities in other strand areas. While pupils are appropriately challenged in their learning and regularly engage in problem-solving activities, exposure to more collaborative open-ended problem solving and enquiry-based experiences would further enhance their learning. This might usefully incorporate the school's agreed problem-solving strategy.

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

Overall, the learning experiences provided for pupils in Mathematics are of a very high standard. Learning environments support and celebrate pupils' mathematics learning very effectively. Pupils are actively and purposefully engaged in their learning and display very positive attitudes to Mathematics. All pupils are supported in their learning through engagement with differentiated activities in small group stations. This results in high-quality learning outcomes for pupils. Pupils purposefully participate in a wide range of games based on well-established mathematical programmes. Pupils in infant classes engage daily in play-based integrated learning that regularly includes a mathematical focus. Resources, including information and communication technologies, are used purposefully and appropriately. While pupils have access to the required mathematical language for learning, greater attention to promoting their use of this language during lessons is encouraged.

Overall, teaching is of a very high standard with some exemplary team teaching observed. The instructional leadership by the principal is of a very high quality. Teachers use a very effective range of methodologies based on well-researched programmes such as *Ready Set Go Maths*, *Numicon* and *Mata sa Rang*. Teachers' collective practice is a significant strength. They engage in regular and focused professional development which is systematically shared, resulting in the collective display of very high levels of expertise. Team teaching is a well-established feature of practice and facilitates differentiated learning for pupils in collaborative group settings. Whole-class lessons are very well structured, stimulating and interesting. Pupils' learning is promoted enthusiastically by all teachers.

Overall, the quality of assessment is good. A very good range of assessment data is gathered in all classes. Screening practices are well embedded; however, the use of diagnostic testing is not yet a feature of assessment practices. The planned use of a non-verbal reasoning test is appropriate given that there is a cohort of pupils in the school with needs in English as an additional language (EAL). This additional data could then be used to ensure that attainment in Mathematics is in line with all pupils' abilities. Teacher observations recorded during team teaching are not directly linked to the identified differentiated learning objectives that are planned. Currently, all special educational needs provision is in-class; this is reviewed regularly.

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

The whole-school plan for Mathematics is of a very good standard. It is reviewed very regularly in light of the developing status of the school. It is used to inform teachers' long and short-term planning very effectively; resulting in a broad and balanced delivery of the mathematics curriculum.

Individual teachers' planning is very good overall with a comprehensive range of learning activities outlined. Teachers work together successfully to identify differentiated learning objectives in team-teaching plans; this very good practice should also be evident in mainstream teachers' whole-class short-term planning.

The school reported that it is not currently engaging in the SSE process due to industrial action. However, evidence available from SSE work conducted prior to the industrial action shows that the school has engaged well in the SSE process.

#### **4. CHILD PROTECTION**

The following aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* were checked during the evaluation:

1. Teachers' access to a copy of the school's Child Protection policy
2. The prominent display of the name of Designated Liaison Person near the main entrance

The school was fully compliant with both aspects.

## **Appendix**

School response to the report

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The board welcomes this Curriculum Evaluation and is happy that all the hard work of the staff and children has been recognised. The report reflects the very high quality of teaching (both planning and delivery) and the very high standards of learning within the school. The board would like to acknowledge that this has been achieved in just over three years.

**Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection**

Open-ended and enquiry based mathematical learning experiences are activities which will continue to be developed across all year groups to ensure that mathematical understanding and application is enhanced. This will be extended to the older classes as the school grows.

Various ways of linking teachers' observations directly to the differentiated learning objectives are being reflected on at present. A whole school approach will be developed during the current academic year.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;