



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Mathematics REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St. Kilian's Community School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Ballywaltrim Bray Co. Wicklow
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	91376L
Dáta na cigireachta/ Dates of evaluation	07/11/2024 and 09/11/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	14/01/2025

What is a subject inspection?

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. 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. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

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 subject inspection 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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">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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">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.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 students.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Dates of inspection	07/11/2024 and 09/11/2024
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students, including focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during 7 lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

St Kilian's Community School is a co-educational school under the trusteeship of the Franciscan and Marist Orders and Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). The school has a current enrolment of 418 students. It provides the Junior Cycle (JC), the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). The school currently participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good with some very good practice observed.
- Mathematics was taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect where students were consistently affirmed for their contributions during lessons.
- Teachers provided effective oral feedback during lessons, but there was minimal written formative feedback or evidence of monitoring in students' copybooks.
- Subject provision and whole school support for the subject, and the arrangements for students in need of support with Mathematics was very good.
- All lessons were well prepared and structured, in a few of these, the learning resources provided were very good.
- The quality of subject planning was good, however, some aspects of subject planning required attention.

Recommendations

- To support all student needs and ensure that all students are suitably challenged, teachers should collaborate to further plan and develop differentiated teaching approaches in Mathematics.
- All available relevant statistical data and information should be used to inform decision-making for Mathematics, and to monitor student progress and outcomes.
- The mathematics department should review their planning documents to further support the implementation of the curriculum and progress students' learning.
- Teachers should expose students to more enquiry-based learning and engage in more group activities to develop their critical-thinking skills and social learning.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good overall with some examples of very good practice. In the lessons observed teachers demonstrated very good subject knowledge and showed enthusiasm for and confidence in teaching Mathematics.
- Teachers were very well prepared, and lessons were well-structured. Learning intentions were shared with the students and this practice provided context for the learning activities. Key words and mathematical terminology used in activities were explicitly taught.
- Relationships between students and teachers were very good. Students worked in supportive, positive, affirming learning environments where students' work was proudly displayed on the walls.
- Most students were purposefully engaged with the learning tasks. However, in almost all lessons there were students who were not sufficiently challenged and would have benefitted from activities more suited to their ability and this should be addressed. Mathematics teachers should further differentiate daily lessons across all class groups to provide more challenge and diversify the learning experience for all students.
- Teachers used questioning as a very effective method of developing problem-solving skills. In the most productive lessons, students were encouraged to estimate their answers before calculation, an extension of this practice is recommended.
- In most lessons, the main methodology used was high quality teacher instruction, combined with individual, and group or pair activities. There was a need to for greater balance between teacher input and student activity in the majority of lessons. In all lessons observed there was scope to vary students' learning experiences and add greater context to their learning.
- A few lessons featured very effective enquiry-based learning activities and it would be valuable for this practice to be embedded across the mathematics department. In one lesson students eagerly participated in a group activity where they were presented with a practical problem-solving task used to verify Pythagoras theorem. Teachers should plan collaboratively to design teaching strategies aimed at developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- In a highly effective lesson preparation was made for planning a shopping trip. This activity involved students obtaining relevant data from two-way travel timetables and working with the 24-hour clock. This activity provided them with the opportunity to engage in mathematics in the real world and to consider multiple solutions to problem solving, developing their decision-making skills. The teacher also requested that students' estimate their answers before calculations were made. This practice is to be commended.
- Teachers were very effective in responding to students' needs, providing very good one-to-one support. They addressed any issues which arose in homework and continually moved around the room monitoring student work and providing support when needed. There was limited written feedback in copybooks.
- In a few lessons, digital technologies were used as a teaching aid. This was evident in a geometry lesson where a graphing software tool was used to good effect to highlight the relationship between the slopes of parallel and perpendicular lines. In this instance, students engaged in critical thinking where they were asked to create functions which would generate parallel lines and perpendicular lines. This teaching approach should be extended throughout the department.
- Students who participated in the focus group reflected positively on their experiences with Mathematics. They described their learning environment as supportive and said they felt they would get help from their teachers if they asked for it. They stated that their teachers made great effort to ensure that all students were involved in all class

activities. Some students spoke favourably about receiving valuable support in an after-school maths club which was available to all, prior to end of term assessments.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- Subject provision and whole school support for Mathematics was very good. Time allocation for Mathematics was in line with the curriculum guidelines. Lessons were of 40-minute duration with four lessons per week in first year, while second, and third years received five lessons per week. Students following the junior cycle school programme receive four periods of Mathematics in each JC year. In addition, they receive three lessons of numeracy per week in first year and two lessons of numeracy per week in second and third year. Four 40-minute lessons were provided per week for TY and six lessons in both fifth and sixth year of leaving certificate established. Students taking leaving certificate applied receive three lessons per week.
- Effective concurrent timetabling was in place for all year groups after first year allowing for the placement of students into level-specific classes best suited to their abilities. This placement occurs in the second term for second years and the beginning of leaving certificate for fifth years.
- Provision for students with additional educational needs was very good. Individual student needs were identified through communication with feeder primary schools and standardised testing carried out prior to entry. Relevant information on the individual needs of each student and suggested teaching strategies were available to the mathematics teachers on the school's online platform.
- The main method of student support was in-class support. Individual and small group withdrawal were also used to deliver learning support in Mathematics. School management very effectively support student learning through the implementation of team teaching and the inclusion of numeracy lessons twice weekly for students following JCSP.
- Numeracy testing and tracking takes place as a DEIS initiative. While it was good practice to carry out analysis on all data available, further development is required if this analysis is to inform practice and decision-making in Mathematics. The subject department should look at all data to assess and monitor the progress and outcome for students and to set targets for improvement.
- It is favourable that classes where possible are timetabled, in one of the three dedicated maths rooms. Each room is equipped with a data projector and teachers are provided with a digital device by the school. Four computer rooms are available to the mathematics department on a booking system.

3. Planning and Preparation

- The overall quality of planning and preparation was good, with some aspects of departmental planning requiring development. Individual planning and preparation were good, well-structured, and well-planned lessons were observed.
- Departmental schemes of work were available for all year groups and programmes. These were of acceptable quality and outlined the agreed-upon sequence of topics, timings, and learning outcomes. There was scope to develop schemes of work to further support the implementation of the curriculum specifications and further progress students' learning. It was positive that teachers have collated a bank of shared resources which require further organisation.
- Students are in mixed ability class groups in first year and remain in mixed ability for the first term of second year. This is to be commended as it affords students time to experience Mathematics at higher level and allows them to make more informed decisions concerning their future studies moving forward.

- It is good that the mathematics department have engaged in common assessment of first years which includes self-reflection with the aim of helping students self-assess areas for improvement. It is recommended that this practice is extended to other year groups.
- Members of the mathematics department worked well as a team. The role of subject coordinator is shared amongst the members of the department. It is recommended that one teacher adopt the role of subject coordinator and that this role be rotated, thereby building leadership capacity within the department.
- Information on students with additional educational needs was available electronically, and teachers demonstrated a good level of awareness of students' individual needs.
- Formal and informal subject department meetings provided opportunities to discuss assessment arrangements and organisational matters and the analysis of student performance. It was advised that teachers also give time to sharing and evaluating teaching methodologies and approaches as a regular agenda item. The minutes of these meetings should be stored digitally in the departmental folder.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the students of St. Kilian's
Community School about their
learning in Mathematics

Date of inspection: 07/11/2024

What kind of inspection did your school have?



A subject inspection was completed in your school. The inspector observed lessons and spoke with the principal and teachers. The inspector met with a group of students to talk to them about their learning in Mathematics.

What were the main findings of the inspection?



The inspector saw many things during the inspection. The main findings were:

- Teaching and learning were good overall, and at times the teaching was very good.
- Teachers and students got on very well together.
- The teachers were very good at helping students in class, but they should give written comments on homework to show students how they can improve.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in Mathematics?



- Teachers should carry out a statistical analysis on student results to see if they are improving and find out how they can best help.
- Teachers should plan to do more group activities in class so that students have the opportunity to learn from each other.
- Teachers should work together to decide how best to improve the learning experiences of all students.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
Special thanks to the students who participated 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