An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Mathematics
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Paul's Senior National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Clonrosse Drive, Ayrfield, Dublin 13
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	19618B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	02/04/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	10/09/2025

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999),* the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)* and the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum.* 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 outcomes
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learning 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.

Included in this curriculum evaluation 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

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) 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 pupils.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	02/04/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Discussion with principal and teachers • Review of relevant documents • Pupil focus-group interview	• Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal and teachers

School context

Saint Paul's Senior National School is a mixed school, which caters for pupils from third to sixth class. The school also has one special class for pupils with autism. It is located in Ayrfield, Dublin 13 and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. At the time of the evaluation, there were 224 pupils enrolled. Staffing comprised an administrative principal, nine mainstream teachers, one special class teacher and four special education teachers.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics was of a high standard.
- The overall quality of pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics was good.
- Teaching was good, with some examples of very good practice observed.
- Assessment practices were commendable.
- The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was very effective overall.

Recommendations

- School leaders should review how special education teaching posts are deployed to ensure targeted additional support for pupils with identified needs in Mathematics is provided in accordance with the provisions of Circular 0064/24.
- Teachers should ensure all pupils have a system of recording learning that provides them with formative feedback and enables them to note, support and reflect on their learning and progression in Mathematics.
- All teachers should collaboratively review, agree and implement whole-school approaches to differentiated teaching strategies that appropriately challenge and extend learning in Mathematics for all pupils.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning outcomes was of a high standard. Most pupils demonstrated positive dispositions towards their learning in Mathematics. During lessons, pupils responded well to questioning and demonstrated a good capacity to reason mathematically and use appropriate mathematical language. Pupils had a good knowledge of a range of curriculum strands, including Measures and Number. Evidence from a range of summative assessment data demonstrated that pupils were achieving well in Mathematics with evidence of very good achievement in particular assessments.

In the lessons observed, pupils listened attentively and participated actively. Where learning was most productive, pupils were provided with appropriate time to think, to work collaboratively, use subject-specific language and demonstrate mathematical reasoning and justification skills. In these lessons, pupils were well-supported to develop their conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. They engaged actively to design buildings and could recall different types of angles and their approximate size. Pupils could also present numbers as percentages, fractions and decimals accurately and they presented individual solution approaches outlining why one method could be more efficient than another. In most classes, pupils' usual seating arrangement was in groups, which supported their ongoing incidental and informal learning. This practice should be extended to all classes.

While copybooks were well organised and carefully presented in a few settings, this practice was not shared across the school. All teachers should ensure that each pupil has a maths copy and that this resource is used to demonstrate progression through formative feedback to act as a stimulus to support pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills in Mathematics.

During the focus group with pupils from the senior classes, pupils shared their understanding of the value and importance of Mathematics to their lives outside school. They reported that they thought it was a good idea that all classes engaged in Mathematics at the same time every day describing it as an event across the school. Almost all pupils reported that they liked Mathematics and valued learning Mathematics outside the classroom. They reported that they played games, quizzes and trails as part of their mathematics lessons. Pupils would welcome more opportunities to work collaboratively and learn from one another.

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

The overall quality of pupils' learning experiences in Mathematics was good. The school and classroom environments were calm, organised and respectful. Pupils had access to a range of mathematical resources, including concrete materials. Individual whiteboards were used purposefully in all classrooms to demonstrate pupils' understanding. Where these experiences were most successful, pupils' communication skills were challenged and developed through a range of stimulating questions and interesting tasks. While all pupils enjoyed frequent opportunities to be active in their learning, the over-emphasis on grouping pupils in ability groups restricted their learning experiences.

Teaching was good overall, with some examples of very good practice noted. All teachers demonstrated highly effective classroom management skills, and all interactions observed between pupils and teachers were very respectful. Where very good practice was observed, teachers provided pupils with many opportunities to explain, justify and discuss various strategies and problem-solving approaches. In these instances, the classroom environment displayed interesting questions, possible strategies and mathematical language to support all pupils. All teachers should incorporate these learning experiences more regularly into lessons. In some instances, special education teaching posts were deployed for the delivery of an adapted mainstream programme in Mathematics to groups of pupils instead of the posts being used solely to provide additional support. This replaced the mainstream lesson for those pupils and did not facilitate special education teachers to provide tailored additional supports for those pupils. This should be reviewed to ensure that resources are used in accordance with Circular 0064/24.

The overall quality of assessment was effective. All teachers administered termly tests in Mathematics and maintained a record of results. Where very good practice was observed, records of pupils' assessment information were analysed, annotated and used to inform future planning. In addition, some teachers provided pupils with formative feedback to enable them to reflect on their learning and understand their errors. This very good practice should be extended to all classrooms. Targets within student-support plans should be reviewed by all teachers to ensure targets are in response to priority needs, are specific and monitored appropriately to support the recording of pupils' incremental progress.

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 effective overall. School leaders regularly analysed standardised test results to inform practice. Commendably, whole-school approaches outlined in relevant policies were in place that included all teachers documenting a range of standardised test results for each pupil, which travelled with them as they progressed through the school.

The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was very effective. The most recent iterations of SSE included literacy and wellbeing. The school engaged in a process to carefully analyse data and established targeted approaches to improve pupils' interest, attitude and enjoyment of reading. Pupils, parents and teachers were involved in the process, and it was evident that this impacted positively on pupils. As part of the process to improve pupils' wellbeing, the school has introduced a pupils' council. This council, elected democratically, has a key role in supporting the shared vision of the rights of the child across the school.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of St Paul's Senior National School about their learning in Mathematics
Date of inspection: 02/04/2025

Introduction

Your school had an inspection of Mathematics recently. This page for pupils describes what the inspectors found and gives ideas about what the school should do to make learning better.

What did the inspectors do during the visit?

The inspectors visited classrooms and talked to teachers and pupils about the work they were doing. An inspector also met with a focus group of pupils to talk to them about their learning.

What did the inspectors find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Pupils enjoyed Mathematics and could explain their learning well.
- Teachers were good at teaching Mathematics and teachers and pupils were very respectful to one another.
- Leaders and teachers planned well for teaching and learning in Mathematics.

What the inspectors said the school should do to make learning better

- Class teachers and special education teachers could work together more to support pupils who need extra help in Mathematics.
- Teachers should help pupils to keep track of their learning in Mathematics and help them understand and improve their skills.
- Teachers and school leaders should work together to make sure all lessons help all pupils learn more and understand better.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to pupils who took part 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