



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Subject Inspection: Mathematics REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Christ Ri
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Presentation Secondary School Borris Road Portlaoise
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	634510
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	19/03/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	23/05/2025

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# 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 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"><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 students.</li></ol>

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

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# Subject inspection

<b>Date of inspection</b>	18 and 19 March 2025
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with the principal, deputy principals and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students, including focus groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during five one-hour lessons, one of which featured team-teaching</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to the principal, deputy principals and subject teachers</li></ul>

## School context

Scoil Chríost Rí is a Presentation girls' post-primary school operated under the trusteeship of the Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). The school has a current enrolment of 802 students and offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate (Established) LCE.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from very good to required improvement.
- Teachers created positive learning environments where student participation was consistently affirmed and encouraged.
- Teachers used a range of methodologies to promote learning; teaching for understanding was underdeveloped in a significant minority of lessons.
- Overall, the quality of assessment was good with scope to improve the effectiveness of formative assessment and feedback approaches to support and progress learning.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support in Mathematics was very good overall.
- The quality of planning and preparation in the mathematics department was good overall; with further development of schemes of work required.

### Recommendations

- The mathematics department needs to build on its practice of teaching for understanding to ensure that all lessons support learners' successful engagement with lesson content.
- To enhance the effectiveness of formative assessment, teachers should use classroom-based strategies that facilitate efficient review of students' learning and; provide written formative feedback on students' work.
- TY mathematics class groups should be formed using a mixed ability approach.
- It is recommended the mathematics department redevelop the schemes of work into units of learning that connect related topics across strands and that records reflections on teaching, learning and assessment.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

### 1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from very good to required improvement.
- Interactions between students and teachers were very respectful and positive, and students worked in affirming and productive learning environments.
- All classrooms visited presented attractive and stimulating settings, including the display of students' work.
- All teachers shared learning intentions with students. This communication was particularly effective in lessons where previous content was extended and teachers elicited students' prior learning to form connections with the intended learning.
- In all lessons observed, teachers placed an emphasis on mathematical keywords and notation. Very effective practice fostered dialogue using subject specific language to frame questions and answers. This appropriate use of mathematical literacy in the form of keywords and notation supported students' conceptual exploration of Mathematics.
- There was a very successful balance between teacher input and student activity, in all lessons observed.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers cultivated students' understanding through a range of methodologies and resources including the use of digital technology and mathematical manipulatives. These approaches aligned to the mathematics department's strategies for differentiation noting difference by content, process and outcome. However, teaching for understanding required further development in a significant minority of lessons and this needs to be addressed.
- Students in all lessons observed, had opportunities to discuss their work with students seated next to them. In a small number of lessons, teachers engaged students in structured and purposeful pair and group work. This very effective practice facilitated the development of peer learning skills. Teachers should increase students' opportunities to engage in structured and purposeful pair and group work.
- Provision of resources for teaching and learning was very good. All classrooms were equipped with data projectors and teachers were provided with laptops. In addition, three dedicated computer classrooms and three laptop trollies were available to teachers. Both students and teachers had access to the school's digital platform.
- During the focus group discussion, students spoke very highly of their teachers. They felt encouraged and supported with their learning, and enjoyed the variety of topics within Mathematics and lessons that developed their mathematical understanding and skills.
- The student focus group also appreciated the benefits of technology to support their learning. In addition to the resources teachers uploaded to the school's digital platform, a significant minority of these students also had access to teacher videos which they found particularly helpful.
- The quality of assessment was good overall.
- All teachers used questioning as their main methodology to assess students' understanding and progress. There was, however, an over-reliance on global and lower-order questioning, resulting in limited assessment of all students' understanding and progress. In the examples of best practice, teachers exploited opportunities for students to explain their thinking. Teachers need to ensure they use an appropriate mixture of global, targeted, lower and higher order questioning during lessons.
- All teachers encouraged students to show their work and adopt a methodological approach to Mathematics. During the lessons, observation of students' work indicated that this guidance was not always followed. Mathematics teachers should further develop strategies during lessons that promote the development of students' understanding and structured, logical presentation of work.

- In all lessons observed, teachers encouraged students to raise queries concerning the content and actively circulated the classroom to monitor students' progress as they worked on assigned tasks and provided one-to-one guidance where necessary. This is very good practice.
- Teachers regularly assigned homework and corrected it in class. The practice of providing formative feedback on students' work varied and this should be addressed to ensure that students receive written guidance towards improvement on key pieces of work.
- Teachers administered common assessments at key points during the year. This is very good practice.
- It is highly commendable that the mathematics department encouraged all students to take part in extra-curricular events and co-curricular activities promoting Mathematics including the opportunity to participate in national competitions.

## 2. Subject provision and whole school support

- Overall, the quality of subject provision and whole-school support in Mathematics was very good.
- There was very good communication between the special educational needs (SEN) team and the mathematics department to co-ordinate and support engagement with Mathematics for students with additional needs. Several effective approaches were used including the deployment of a qualified mathematics teacher to provide an extra mathematics class each week for students with additional educational needs and English as an additional language (EAL). Highly commendably, the EAL mathematics class focused explicitly on the language of mathematics.
- Effective concurrent timetabling allowed for the placement of students into level-specific classes best suited to their abilities. This placement occurred at the beginning of second year and at the beginning of fifth year.
- It was a very significant strength of the mathematics department that all students were encouraged to pursue higher level for as long as possible and that teachers aligned subject matter across levels to facilitate movement of students with minimal loss of content incurred.
- Banding of students had recently been introduced into the optional Transition Year programme (TY). Going forward, a return to the previous practice where students were placed in mixed-ability classes during TY is recommended.
- The support from the senior management team for teacher professional learning was very good. Attendance of appropriate professional learning events was encouraged and facilitated.

## 3. Planning and preparation

- Overall the quality of planning and preparation in the mathematics department was good.
- A subject co-ordinator was appointed and rotation was encouraged within the mathematics team. It is good practice to rotate this role between teachers, as this allows for the development of organisational and leadership capacities within the department.
- Mathematics teachers formed a collegial and collaborative team. All planning documents were stored electronically and included shared learning resources. Formal and informal subject department meetings provided opportunities to discuss teaching, learning and assessment arrangements, as well as organisational matters. Reflections and outcomes relating to practice should be recorded and used to inform planning of Mathematics.

- The mathematics department's plan included schemes of work developed from textbook chapters rather than from units of learning that integrate related topics across strands. It is recommended the mathematics department redevelop the schemes of work into units of learning that connect related topics across strands.
- The mathematics department conducted its own analysis of the junior cycle and senior cycle state examination results. The outcomes from this process were used to inform action planning towards improvement. This is very good practice.

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



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

For the students of Scoil Christ Ri  
about their learning in Mathematics

Date of inspection:

19/03/2025

### 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?



- Teaching and learning was very good in the main but some lessons required improvement.
- Teachers used a variety of ways to help students learn, however, there needs to be more of a focus on teaching for understanding.
- Assessment was good overall but teachers need to use better ways of checking all students' progress and learning during lessons. Also, students' work showed very few comments from teachers explaining how they could improve.

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



- Teachers should vary learners' experience more to improve their understanding and skills in Mathematics.
- Teachers should use different ways to check on student learning throughout the lesson and provide written comments on key pieces of work to show students how they can improve.
- Teachers plans for teaching, learning and assessment should be updated so that there are opportunities to make connections between topics.

;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
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Provision that is excellent</b> 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
<b>Very good</b>	<b>Provision that is very good</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Provision that is good</b> 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
<b>Requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b> 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
<b>Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b> 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