

Department of Education and Skills

**Inspection of a course
in an Irish College**

REPORT

Coláiste Chamuis

Camus, County Galway

Reference Code: CGC082

Date of inspection: 1 August 2017



**AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS
AGUS SCILEANNA** | **DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
AND SKILLS**

INSPECTORATE

INTRODUCTION

The Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills evaluates the quality of educational provision in a certain number of courses provided each year by Irish colleges on behalf of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The report on this Irish course is based on observation of teaching, learning and cultural activities, interaction with students and discussion with management as well as the review of relevant documentation.

Inspectors describe the quality of three main areas of provision 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 college's provision in each area.

The steering committee of the Irish-language college was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the steering committee chose to accept the report without response.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Key findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was good on this course; there were opportunities to improve the use of teaching aids.
- The quality of the students' experience of Irish language and culture was very good.
- The quality of leadership and management was very good overall; the learning settings were suitable overall, although there were opportunities to improve accommodation matters.
- The college had made a good effort to implement the previous recommendations made.

Main recommendations

- Separate learning settings should be used for each individual class for the morning classes.
- Teaching resources should be used more regularly to further enhance the teaching and learning process.

1. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning on the course was good. Inspectors paid a short visit to every classroom. They observed lessons in classes under the care of newly-qualified teachers who had not previously had an inspection of their work.
- Positive aspects were noted in the teaching of these teachers. For example, the teachers used group teaching methods that were effective. They also managed to ensure that all the students participated in the lessons.
- All of the teachers were prepared to teach for communication and they tried to encourage the students to speak. Roleplay was observed in some classes that was enjoyable and beneficial.
- Educational charts and labels were on display around the college. The college management accepted the recommendation made in this regard in a previous report. It was clear that these resources assisted in enhancing the teaching and learning process.
- It was reported that there was also another store of teaching resources available to teachers. It is recommended that these be used more regularly in the classrooms, as a central part of lessons, to get greater practical benefit from them.
- During the morning classes, the students are given regular opportunities to read books by themselves, to promote their experience of the vocabulary, rhythm and tone of the language. To encourage and increase their interest in Irish, each pupil is given a selection Irish novels at the end of the course.

2. QUALITY OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

- The quality of the students' experience of Irish language and culture was very good. In the morning classes the teacher emphasised vocabulary enrichment to ensure that the students would have knowledge of rich Irish expressions.
- The students had practical contact with the local inhabitants. Visitors from the area came to formally address the students and students had the opportunity to meet local people informally also. Students heard locals speak Irish naturally, something that really added to the cultural experience they had.
- On the day of the inspection, a wide range of afternoon activities were organised for the students. The teachers and the assistants organised enjoyable games and sports during this period. The students made effective use of an appropriate range of vocabulary related to the activities in which they participated.

3. QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of the management and leadership on the course was very good overall. The managers of the course made a priority of looking after the students' welfare and they ensured that everyone on the course understood the importance of health and safety issues.
 - The management of resources for the course was good. The two sites in which the morning classes were held were suitable for that kind of work. It was noted, however, that two classes were being taught in one large hall. It was difficult for the teachers and the students to ensure that the noise from one class did not disrupt the work of the other.
 - On the day of the inspection it was reported that the college management tried to ensure that there were appropriate partitions between each of the classes, but it had not been possible for these to be in place in time for this course. It is recommended that individual learning settings, separate from each other, be made available for each class group from now on.
 - The Irish course authorities confirmed that the college's steering committee has formally adopted a child protection policy, as required by the provisions of *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011), and that the practice of the Irish course is in line with the requirements of *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011).
 - It was confirmed that a copy of the health and safety statement, the code of behaviour and the anti-bullying policy were available. A health and safety officer was recorded in the college's plan for the Irish course.
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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 Irish college's provision in each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good 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 colleges in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other colleges 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	Good 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 students' learning. The college 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	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The college 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	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-college 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;

