

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Inspection of a course  
in a Coláiste Gaeilge (Irish College)**

**REPORT**

**Coláiste na bhFiann  
Ros Muc, County Galway  
Reference Code: CGC091**

**Date of inspection: 20 July 2017**



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

**AN CHIGIREACTH**

## **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 Irish-language college steering committee was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the steering committee will be found in the appendix of this report.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

### **Key findings**

- The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory.
- Although appropriate methodologies were selected, their implementation was not always effective.
- The quality of leadership and management for the course was good and a comprehensive programme as well as all essential policies were available.
- Students were very well cared for and plenty leadership opportunities were created for them.
- It wasn't apparent that any progress had taken place regarding the recommendations from the last report based on using a greater range of teaching aids and resources and placing an emphasis on the Irish language media and on new technologies during classes.

### **Main recommendations**

- It is recommended that there be further development of teaching approaches that support cooperative learning and the effective use of teacher questioning to support assessment and differentiated learning.
- It is again recommended that a greater range of teaching aids and resources be used in classes, including Irish media and new technologies.

### **QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory.
- The work in most classes was well-structured.
- Suitable teaching approaches were adopted that supported cooperative learning and created opportunities for students to speak the language but these were not always effectively implemented.
- Teacher talk was too much to the fore in most classes.
- It is recommended that there be an appropriate structure to group work – each member of the group having a defined role, ensuring the task is time-bound, having a task for those who are listening and, in one case, that time be allocated for feedback from the groups.
- Teacher questioning was used in each class to check prior learning and to monitor progress in learning. Too frequently, however, the questions were closed and did not encourage a participative approach from students or effective assessment of learning.
- It is recommended that the style and role of questioning be reviewed and that it be ensured that the teacher's questions support differentiation in learning, with a specific focus on higher order questioning as was the case in a minority of classes. Students need to be given time to respond, they should be named and the chorus response that was common feature in all classes should be avoided.
- In keeping with the aims of the college, the development of listening and oral skills was the main focus. To progress learning and to effectively support preparations for debates and speeches, as observed, it is recommended that students have access to appropriate writing and reference resources including hard copies of dictionaries and access to electronic dictionaries.
- Teachers reviewed what had been learned at the end of most lessons. However, it must be ensured that the emphasis, when reviewing the learning intentions, is on the development of the students' own skills as reflective language learners.

### **QUALITY OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF IRISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

- There was a very good range of afternoon and evening activities available and there was effective planning to ensure the activities reinforced the learning from the morning's work.
- Very effective strategies were employed to support the use of Irish amongst students.

### **QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The quality of leadership and management was good.
- 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).
- The students were well managed by means of the college's leadership system ('cinnirí') and they were given opportunities to develop their leadership skills.
- It was confirmed that a copy of the health and safety statement, the code of behaviour and the anti-bullying policy were available.
- It wasn't apparent that any progress had taken place regarding the recommendations from the report in 2015: using a greater range of teaching aids and resources and placing an emphasis on Irish language media and on new technologies in the classes.
- It is again recommended that a greater range of teaching aids and resources be used in classes, including new technology, and making teachers aware of the provision. Furthermore, it is recommended that the display of handmade posters that were used in

classes be extended to create a print-rich, attractive, relevant and legible environment to support learning.

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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
<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 colleges in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <b>outstanding</b> 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
<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 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<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 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;

## **Appendix**

Irish-language College response to the report

### **Submitted by the steering committee of the College**

**Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

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**Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The organisation intends to build on current experience in the area of modern technologies.

*(The above text is a translation of the Irish-language college response to the report submitted by the steering committee of the Irish-language College).*