

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

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

REPORT

Coláiste Laichtín

Inis Oírr, Oileáin Árann, County Galway

Reference Code: CGC131

Date of inspection: 8 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 in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the steering committee.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Key findings

- The quality of learning was good overall, with most of the students drawing great benefit from the course. There was potential to improve the quality of learning of students who had little Irish.
- The quality of teaching was good overall. Some aspects of teaching were very good, although the use of teaching aids could be improved.
- The quality of the students' experience of the island's Irish language and culture was very good.
- The quality of leadership and management was very good.
- The college made a satisfactory attempt to implement the recommendations made in previous inspection reports, especially in relation to demonstrations and displaying educational charts.

Main recommendations

- An effort should be made to improve the standard of spoken language skills among students with little Irish.
- Further use should be made of teaching aids during morning classes to consolidate students' understanding and the further improve their learning experience.

1. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching was good overall. Some aspects of teaching observed in two classrooms were very good. Lessons were effectively structured and the teachers' commitment and dedication during their work were apparent.
- The teachers used various effective teaching methods. Teachers appropriately emphasised the teaching of language exemplars, as recommended in the previous report. This worked well for students who already had a good standard of Irish. More attention must be paid to the needs of students with little Irish, however, to improve their learning experience and ability in the spoken language.
- A previous report contained a recommendation to make greater use of demonstrations and teaching aids to support the teaching and learning process. Several educational charts were displayed in the hall and around the college. However, the use of such aids, especially in morning classes, should be increased in order to enrich lessons and to consolidate students' understanding.
- The quality of learning was good overall, with the majority of students capable and confident in using the Irish they learned. All students were happy to actively participate in the various lessons and games.
- A small number of students were not as comfortable in using Irish as their peers. Specific and realistic goals regarding spoken language skills should be set for each student to reach by the end of the course.

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

- The quality of students' experience of the Irish language and culture was very good. The location of this course, on Inis Oírr, the smallest of the Aran Islands, is very convenient for increasing students' experience of Irish culture.
- Students had regular opportunities to meet with islanders during the various afternoon activities and on the journey from their accommodation to the centre every day. They got an excellent taste of Gaeltacht life and how people live on an island off the coast.
- On the day of the inspection, sports and other games were effectively organised. All students participated in enjoyable activities. Everyone – teachers, head prefects and students – was heard speaking Irish fluently.

3. QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management on the course was very good. The principal showed a high commitment to Irish and to providing a high-standard course to all attending students.
- Management of students was very good, both in morning classes and afternoon activities. Appropriate emphasis was placed on good behaviour and student safety.

- 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 registered 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;