

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

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

REPORT

**Coláiste Lurgan
Inverin, County Galway
Reference Code: CGC021**

Date of inspection: 11 July 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

- A wide and valuable range of events were provided to students on this course, especially in music and experiences of the Connemara Gaeltacht.
- A number of staff members employed as teachers on this course were not registered with the Teaching Council; this did not adhere to the Regulations under which Recognition is Granted to Irish-language Colleges (2017) nor with the details provided on the Recognition Form.
- Both staff members and students showed that they were committed to the promotion of Irish; this was to be commended.
- Not all rolls for the course were up-to-date on the day of inspection.
- It was evident that good progress had been made on the implementation of recommendations made in the last evaluation in relation to the preparation of the course teaching programme and the promotion of cooperative learning, but there was more to do in relation to the implementation of a number of other recommendations.
- The teachers approached teaching in the classes observed with energy and it was clear that the comprehensive nature of the newly-prepared teaching programme increased the certainty of learning experiences; it was only in a minority of classes, however, that definitive emphasis was placed on extending the speaking ability of each individual student.

Main recommendations

- The college authorities must ensure that everyone employed as a teacher is registered with the Teaching Council, as required by the Regulations under which Recognition is Granted to Irish-language Colleges (2017).
- To ensure consistency and differentiation, it is recommended that a collective understanding is arrived at in relation to the structure of written planning to be prepared at the level of the individual teacher, and that this is implemented as a whole-college practice.
- To build on the mission of the college to promote Irish in an innovative manner, a mission impressed upon the inspection team, management must ensure that differentiation is practised and every effort is made to extend the linguistic ability of each individual student.

1. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in the morning lessons observed was good; a number were good and others were satisfactory, with a minority being of an extremely good standard. In the best lessons observed, the standard of the learning experience was high and extremely clear emphasis was placed on extending the linguistic ability of the individual student. The students showed positive attitudes in relation to Irish and the events organised on the course. However, when asked, they were not as certain that there was a noticeable improvement in their own proficiency in Irish. Building on the best practices on the course, it is recommended that the language enrichment and expansion of each student is consolidated.
- Greater emphasis was placed on cooperative learning, as recommended previously.
- Staff worked well in partnership to promote the use of Irish in a range of natural settings. Teachers and assistants worked hard to demonstrate examples of rich language, with appropriate emphasis placed on phrases and the dialect of the Connemara Gaeltacht.
- It was clear that the whole-college resource to support conversation worked effectively to help cultivate further consistency in teaching.

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

- The cultural events observed were of good quality and the afternoon events were appropriately organised and supervised.
- Céilí sessions, plays, talent shows and concerts were organised. During an interview with a focus-group of students, the students indicated that they enjoyed these activities. There was a high level of participation in the activities.
- The students demonstrated a positive attitude to the language and to the learning experiences in the music and singing courses.
- The standard of work carried out by student leaders was good. They fulfilled their duties appropriately.

3. QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Overall, there was scope for development in relation to the quality of leadership and management on the course due to it being discovered during the inspection that a number of members of the teaching staff were not registered with the Teaching Council and due to not all attendance rolls being up-to-date.
- It was evident that management were committed to the promotion of the status of Irish among students. Organisation, energy and commitment to the Irish language were clear in the work of the principal.
- A satisfactory plan was prepared for the course.
- 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 would be worthwhile, in order to assist visitors and new students, to display photographs and the names of the designated liaison person and the deputy designated liaison person.
- It was confirmed that a copy of the health and safety statement, the code of behaviour and the anti-bullying policy were available. There was a health and safety officer in place, with responsibility for safety and supervisory issues.

- It was evident that good progress had been made on the recommendations of the last evaluation in relation to the preparation of the teaching programme and the promotion of cooperative learning. However, there is further work to be done in relation to the implementation of other recommendations made in the last report that related to consistency in planning for lessons by individual teachers, differentiations and policies and rolls being fully in accordance with the Regulations.
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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;