

Department of Education and Skills

**Inspection of a Course
in an Irish-language College (Coláiste Gaeilge)**

REPORT

**Coláiste Sheosaimh
Cárna-Cill Chiaráin, Contae na Gaillimhe
Reference Code: CGC101**

Date of inspection: 15 June 2016



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | A N D S K I L L S**

THE INSPECTION

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 Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. This report on the Irish-language course is based on observation of teaching, learning and cultural activities, interaction with students, discussion with management, and inspection of relevant documentation.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Key findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in all classes.
- In almost every class, opportunities were created for the students to co-operate in learning.
- The management and leadership of the course was of high quality.
- The quality of the course plan and planning for individual classes was good.
- The teachers went about their work with enthusiasm and were clearly dedicated to the aims of the college and to the development of the students' competence in Irish.
- There was a very positive relationship between teachers and students.
- The students in the focus group had high praise for the course.

Main recommendations

- It is recommended that practices be developed which will support the effective differentiation of the learning, including teacher questioning, and activities that demand the students' engagement in cooperative learning.
- It is recommended that teaching, learning and assessment methods be included in the course plan and that the assessment methods used during the course be defined.
- It is recommended that the name of the current liaison person and deputy liaison person be registered in the child protection policy and that a health and safety officer be registered in the course plan.

1. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The systematic development of learning in the classes and the links with afternoon activities showed a very good level of collaborative planning amongst the staff.
- The quality of teaching and learning was good in all classes.
- Student learning was primarily differentiated and assessed through teacher questioning. To challenge further students of high ability, it is recommended that more use be made of questions that support the development of high order thinking skills.
- In almost every class, opportunities were created for the students to co-operate in learning through pair and group work based tasks. In each case, various aspects of the tasks were of good quality.
- To further improve such tasks, it is recommended that at the design stage there is a focus on differentiating learning, ensuring each participant has a clear role, that the audience have a task to do during feedback and that a time limit is set for the work.
- The desks in all classrooms were in straight lines. To create seating arrangements that better support communication, it is recommended that the furniture in the classrooms be rearranged.
- In some cases well chosen resources and information and communication technology were used to present material. Regarding a few cases, it is necessary to ensure that the material can be read by all students.
- Though the students' competence in spoken Irish is assessed before they attend the college and their attainment is reported to their parents, there is no structured assessment system in place during the course. It is recommended that assessment methods be devised that will support the development of students' self-awareness as language learners.

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

- A very good range of linguistic and cultural activities was provided for the students.
- These activities were effectively organised and supervised.
- The use of Irish among the students during the activities was very good.

3. QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The management and leadership of the course was of high quality.
- The steering committee has the good practice of organising an in-service day for the staff.
- There was a good quality plan in place for the course which included learning outcomes. To further improve this plan, it is recommended that it includes teaching, learning and assessment methods.
- The Irish-language course authorities confirmed that the college's steering committee has formally adopted the policy regarding child 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-language 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 names of the current liaison person and deputy liaison person were visible in the college but were not those that were registered in the policy. It is recommended that the current names be registered in the policy document.

- A copy of the health and safety statement, the code of conduct and the anti-bullying policy were available. It is recommended that a health and safety officer be registered in the college's plan for the Irish-language course.
- Very good care was taken of the students and mutual respect between them and the staff was evident.
- The students who took part in the focus group were very happy with their learning and with their experience of the course.
- Very good facilities and resources were provided for the course.
- The steering committee and principals make use of recommendations arising from evaluations for self-assessment.
- Good progress was made in the implementation of recommendations made previously. For example, the students' immediate environment was effectively used in one case as a context for teaching grammar.

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.

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