

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

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

REPORT

**Coláiste ACLA
Dooagh, Achill, County Mayo
Reference Code: CGC 241**

Date of inspection: 13 July 2016



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

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Key findings

- The college was very effectively administered and dedication and diligence applied to the work.
- The management committee provided clear guidance and support to the teachers.
- A good atmosphere and a great spirit was apparent throughout the college.
- The students displayed an interest in what they were learning and enjoyment of the afternoon activities and the water activities.
- The teaching and learning was of a good standard.
- It is beneficial for the teaching to conduct self-evaluation at the end of each lesson but it would be worth giving greater attention to pupil progress in terms of the objectives of the lesson.
- Safety issues were a priority at all times.

Main recommendations

- It is recommended that more attention be given to the assessment of Irish at the beginning and at the end of the course and to a formal assessment system to make students aware of their progress in Irish.
- It is recommended that teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) more frequently.

1. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The teaching and learning was of a good quality. The teaching was graded with clear objectives in the observed lessons and they were managed confidently. A range of effective active learning and teaching methodologies were used. The content, structure and pace of the lessons was appropriate to the learning needs of the students. A positive and exciting teaching and learning environment was created.
- It was evident from the classes and from the focus group that student confidence was increasing regarding spoken Irish and that progress was apparent in their understanding and oral language skills. It is recommended that they be made aware of the learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson and given confirmation at the end of the lesson that these have been achieved.
- Although consideration was given to ability levels, interests and monitoring of student progress in the various classes, students could be given an oral/written exam at the beginning and at the end of the course to formally assess their progress. It is recommended that this information be shared with parents/guardians.

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. A good range of events that specifically catered for students' interests was effectively organised. The students participated actively in the events that were observed. A range of events were provided and these were well-organised and exciting for the students.

This supported them in using Irish as a living language and experiencing Irish culture in traditional and contemporary settings.

- Students were motivated to participate and to communicate in their efforts to improve their language skills and to use Irish.
- Students indicated their satisfaction with all classes and activities at a focus-group meeting. They felt they were having enjoyable learning opportunities and therefore that their Irish was improving.
- The Irish college has made progress in terms of implementing the recommendations that had been made in the previous report and the comprehensive teaching programme has been adapted for the classes the teachers were teaching. It would be worth providing a wider range of resources, and to use ICT more frequently, to further develop students' language skills.

3. QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management was very good. There was an effective leadership system operating in the college and students were motivated to participate in the various activities. The senior prefects worked diligently to foster a lively spirit amongst the students.
- Comprehensive planning had been undertaken for the course at college level and the positive outcomes of this planning were evident in the events of the day. Teaching methodologies, learning activities, monitoring strategies, and the resources required to develop students' language skills were outlined in the plan. Links were created between teaching the language in the morning classes and the cultural activities.
- The Irish course authorities confirmed that the college's steering committee has formally adopted the policy regarding child protection, 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.
- The quality of evaluation was good. Learning and teaching were assessed and recorded during each lesson. To enhance this good work, it would be worth developing an assessment system to assess students' progress in Irish and to provide parents with a short report on this.

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.