An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

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

REPORT

Coláiste na Rinne
Rinn ua gCuanach, County Waterford
Reference Code: CGM181

Date of inspection: 15 July 2016
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 (DAHRRGA). 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

- This course was well organised.
- The course was effectively managed.
- Strong emphasis was placed on the spoken language.
- The students’ efforts in the language were encouraged and praised but they would benefit from more contact with the people of the area. On the day of the inspection, the teaching staff undertook their duties enthusiastically.

Main recommendations

- It would be worthwhile to provide students with more opportunities to engage with local people in order to practise their Irish.
- It is recommended that teachers make greater use of technology while teaching.
1. **QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**
   - The quality of teaching and learning was generally good. For the most part, the subject, structure and pace of lessons was appropriate to the students’ learning needs.
   - In the best practice, the learning outcomes of the lessons were clear in the teachers’ planning and in the teaching. The teachers provided the students with rich language input while teaching and made creditable use of effective teaching methods and of various strategies such as working in pairs, group work and language games in order to encourage students’ participation in their learning.
   - The teachers made great efforts to get the students to speak Irish and for the most part, progression in their comprehension skills and their oral Irish was evident.

2. **QUALITY OF STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCE OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**
   - The various afternoon events that were organised were of good quality and catered for the students’ range of interests. On the afternoon of the inspection, a broad range of games was organised. A music group was organised for those not interested in sport. A good effort was made to promote Irish as the language for these events. The leaders were a great help in encouraging the students to speak Irish.
   - During a meeting with the student focus group, they reported that they were enjoying the course and benefiting from it. They also reported that the morning classes were enjoyable and interesting and that they particularly enjoyed the afternoon and evening events.

3. **QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**
   - The quality of leadership and management of the course was good. The principal directed the everyday business of the course effectively. It was clear that there was a very good, positive relationship between staff and the students. It was reported that the principal awarded a prize to the students at the end of the course in recognition of their learning and of their efforts to speak Irish during the course.
   - The teaching staff, the leaders, the assistants and the students co-operated willingly with the principal in the running of the course. An effort was made in some classrooms to create an appropriate language learning and cultural setting with Irish language posters and phrases displayed. It was confirmed that the college’s plan for the Irish course was available.
   - 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.
   - Great care was taken in managing the students. A very positive relationship between staff and students was evident. The college building and grounds were well kept.
• It was recommended in the last inspection report that more opportunities be provided to the students to engage with local people in order to practise their Irish. Some progress has been made in implementing this recommendation but it would be worthwhile to provide the students with even more opportunities to engage with local native speakers.

• It was also recommended that technology be used more in the teaching. Some use of technology was observed in the classes.

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.

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Appendix

Irish-language College response to the report

Submitted by the steering committee of the college
Area 1: Reflection on the content of the report on the Irish college

Coláiste na Rinne’s organising committee accepts this report which acknowledges the significant aspects which greatly support the effective organisation of the work of the course. Much credit is due to the college staff for its efforts on the course and for the welfare of the children attending the college.

Area 2: Follow-through actions completed or planned in order to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection, following the completion of inspection activity.

The recommendations are being attended to as part of the preparatory work for next years’ course.