

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

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

**Coláiste Pobail Chléire
Oileán Chléire, County Cork
Reference Code: CGM221**

Date of inspection: 13 June 2016



AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

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, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. 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 quality of teaching and learning, over the two lessons observed, was commendable.
- It was good that the students were given co-operative learning tasks and it was clear that they enjoyed interacting with each other.
- A need to spend more time ensuring that students understood newly-taught phrases and that they were able to say and use them accurately was identified.
- A fully appropriate programme of afternoon and evening activities was set out for the students.
- Of particular note was the courtesy and good behaviour of the students.

Main recommendations

- It is recommended that dialogue between students during lessons be strengthened by making greater use of activities that require them to use Irish communicatively.
- It is strongly recommended that the amount of writing engaged in by students during lessons be reduced.

1. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning, over the two lessons observed, was commendable.
- It was commendable that the learning intention of the lesson was shared with the students at the beginning of each lesson. This demonstrated that the teachers had considered in advance the new aspects of the language that would be presented to students as well as the learning activities in which they were to engage.
- Appropriate use was made of whole-class teaching in order to present the lesson content to the students. However, sufficient opportunities were not created for the students, during the pre-communication stage of the lesson, to practice orally the newly-learned language under the guidance of the teacher. More time should be spent ensuring that students understand newly-taught phrases and that they can accurately pronounce and use these phrases.
- It was good that the students were given co-operative learning tasks and it was clear that they enjoyed interacting with each other. In light of this, it is recommended that dialogue between the students during lessons be strengthened by making more use of activities that require them to use Irish communicatively. It would be worthwhile, as a support to this, to lay out the classrooms in the form of learning 'pods'.
- The practice of drawing students' attention to points of accuracy, as they arose, was beneficial as were efforts made to present new phrases to the students so as to enrich their Irish. Nonetheless, insufficient opportunities were created for them to practice the accurate manipulation of these phrases.
- Students' progress was assessed by questioning and monitoring the classwork. Determining the level of language they had acquired during the lesson was difficult as it was mostly written exercises that they were engaged in.
- It is strongly recommended that the amount of writing engaged in by students during lessons be reduced.
- As a means of encouraging the widespread use of newly-acquired structures in students' everyday conversation, displaying the basic formation of these phrases in the classroom, so that they can refer to them when needed, would be worthwhile.

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

- Despite the space and facilities available being limited, the *ardchinnirí* set out, under the guidance of the principal, a very suitable programme of afternoon and evening events.
- The links created with the other Irish college on the island were worthwhile. Using this co-operation as a means of giving the students greater exposure to the literary and cultural wealth of the area as well as an understanding of the diversity and abundance of the wildlife around them would be valuable.

3. QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The course was well organised, in that practices were in place that ensured that the students were managed in a way that encouraged their co-operation and participation.
- An atmosphere of courtesy and co-operation was apparent during formal lessons and afternoon events.
- It was confirmed that a plan had been developed for the Irish course. However, a need to collaboratively review implementation of the plan at regular intervals during the course was identified.
- Facilities and resources available to support teaching and learning were limited. It would be helpful if teachers had access to information and communication technology facilities and an internet connection. The development, by the college, of a pool of its own

resources that could be refined from course to course, and would accompany its own language programme, would be worthwhile.

- It is commendable that students' competence in Irish was assessed at the beginning and end of the course. That said, and as was recommended in the 2015 report, more formal use should be made of continuous assessment as a means of ensuring closer alignment between students' learning needs and the teachers' language programme.
- The Irish-language 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-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).
- It was confirmed that copies of the health and safety statement, the code of behaviour and the anti-bullying policy were available. A health and safety officer was documented in the course plan.

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.