

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

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

REPORT

**Coláiste Aodh Mhic Bricne
Ceapach, Teelin, Carrick
County Donegal
Reference code: CGU111**

Date of inspection: 8 July 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

Main findings

- The quality of the teaching and the learning overall was very good. The teaching methods observed during the inspection were of an excellent standard. The lessons were structured very well, with a progressive input of vocabulary.
- A variety of events was provided during the course, which were of a high quality, to promote the students' experience of the Irish language and culture.
- The quality of leadership and management was effective, and suitably organised to foster an enjoyable atmosphere in which to learn Irish.
- There was limited space in two classrooms.
- The teachers organised the planning for lessons daily; however, to foster further continuity, planning should be organised cooperatively at the beginning of the course.

Main recommendations

- It is recommended that the accommodation provided in two classrooms be improved.
- Specific learning objectives, that are developmental, should be outlined in each teacher's planning for the lessons taught during morning classes.

1. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good overall. The teachers organised the planning for the lessons every morning cooperatively; it would be worth doing this short-term planning cooperatively at the beginning of the course, outlining specific objectives, to foster further continuity regarding learning outcomes.
- The teaching approaches observed during the inspection were of an excellent standard. There was a very good structure in the lessons with a progressive input of vocabulary. The teachers used very effective strategies that encouraged students to participate and communicate. The use the teachers made of information and communication technology (ICT) and of concrete materials, to support teaching and to give speaking opportunities during the work in groups, was commendable.
- Most of the students demonstrated an interest and an enjoyment in their learning and the teachers undertook appropriate assessment of progress regarding their ability and fluency in the language.

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

- The quality of students' experience of the Irish language and culture was good. The various events that the staff organised were beneficial and suited the students' range of interests. They made good use of the facilities available. The teachers placed an emphasis on the correct pronunciation of words and on the history of

selected songs during music classes and the students participated enthusiastically in the various activities. The good practice that some of the leaders demonstrated regarding traditional instrumental music, with a group of students who had an interest in that aspect of Irish culture, was commendable.

3. QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The leadership and management of this course were of a high quality. However, there is need to improve the accommodation provided; two classrooms were too small, particularly for the morning classes. The principal, in cooperation with the chairperson, effectively organised and fostered an enjoyable atmosphere for the learning of Irish.
- It was confirmed that the college's plan for the Irish course was available. A suitable plan was prepared for the course including guidance for the teachers regarding policies, teaching materials and assessment. The management reported that the students' oral skills in the language are assessed, at the beginning and at the end of the course, to monitor their progress. It would be worth sharing the results with the parents or guardians at the end of the course.
- A self-assessment system was in place and regular internal reviews were undertaken of the planning and students' learning outcomes.
- The Irish 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 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. The policies are reviewed annually and they were discussed and shared with staff members and students. A health and safety officer was identified in the college's plan for the Irish course.
- The staff managed the distribution of students well, according to their specific learning needs, and they fostered their good behaviour and participation. The leaders fulfilled their duties diligently and enthusiastically. They successfully encouraged the students to participate in the various events and to use Irish.
- At a meeting with a student-focus group, most students agreed that the course was interesting and fun and that their understanding of the language was improving gradually.
- It would be worthwhile for management to review the provision of accommodation and resources provided for the students. In particular, the classrooms need to be refurbished.

Management has made progress in certain areas of the recommendations that were made in previous inspections. It has implemented a whole-college plan and an assessment system; during the inspection visit, the teachers used differentiation strategies in their teaching to cater for the various abilities. The management reported that it was working on completing and documenting risk management issues in the building as recommended in the previous

inspection report. The management had prepared an application for a grant to refurbish the building.

The steering committee of the Irish-language college was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the steering committee chose to accept the report without response.

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