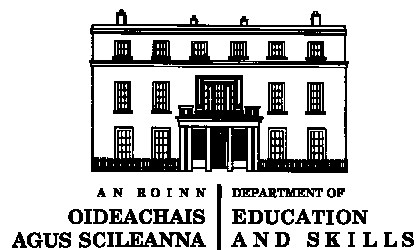


# **Department of Education and Skills**

## **Subject Inspection of Irish REPORT**

**Kennedy College  
New Ross, Co. Wexford  
Roll number: 71660T**

**Date of inspection: 7 March 2016**



# **REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN IRISH**

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## **INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	7 March 2016
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during 4 class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

- The standard of teaching and learning ranged between good and satisfactory in the lessons observed.
- The commitment of teachers to the progress of their students on an academic and holistic basis was clear.
- The use of Irish as the language of instruction, management and interaction was good in the lessons observed but inappropriate use was made from time to time of translation into English as a method of instruction.
- Good efforts were made to motivate and encourage students to work through a range of class activities and the lessons were well paced as a result.
- The Gaeltacht scholarship scheme in place in the school to support the development of certain students' communicative abilities is commended.
- Limited use was made of information and communication technology (ICT) in certain lessons.

## **MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- It is recommended that a support framework for teaching students in the classroom, in which further use is made of ICT, posters and charts and other materials, be provided.
  - It is recommended that more opportunities for communication in the target language are created for students during lessons through the use of pair work and group work.
  - Other strategies other than translation only should be used to ensure the students' understanding of the content of the lesson.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Kennedy College operates under the patronage of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board and the school has a current role of 144 students. The school provides the following educational programmes to the town of New Ross: the Junior Certificate, the Junior Certificate School Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied and the established Leaving Certificate. A range of Post-Leaving Certificate courses are also provided. 30% of the total student cohort has an exemption from the study of Irish.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The standard of teaching and learning ranged between good and satisfactory in the lessons observed with some scope for improvement in certain aspects of teaching.
- The use of Irish as the language of instruction, management and interaction was good overall in the majority of lessons observed. There was too much use of translation from time to time to ensure students' understanding. Although translation is not entirely prohibited, a range of other strategies must be devised to support the students' learning.
- The commitment of teachers to the progress of their students on an academic and holistic basis was clear. Teachers showed empathy and understanding when engaging with students. Discipline was very good and there was a good, respectful atmosphere in the lessons observed.
- Good efforts were made to encourage and motivate the students to work through the use of a range of class activities. Lessons were well paced as a result.
- In general, insufficient opportunities were created for students to speak the target language in accordance with their ability. Generally, neither pair work nor group work were used. This aspect of language learning must be developed as a matter of urgency.
- The skill of asking questions was developed very effectively in one case observed in which students were preparing for oral examinations. A game of questions was used to motivate the students and this strategy was successful.
- Limited use was made of ICT in a couple of cases observed and, although this use is commended, it is necessary to use this valuable teaching resource on a much wider basis. ICT should be used to put the content of the lessons in a motivating, interesting context for students and to provide students with a teaching support framework.
- A range of teaching resources was used during lessons, including textbooks, but the range of teaching resources could be greatly extended. A comprehensive list of teaching resources and other related resources is available on the website of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG). A wide range of teaching material is also available on the website of the Professional Development Service for Teachers.
- Significant encouragement and support were given to students during lessons and the teachers are greatly commended for their enthusiasm in this respect. That said, strategies to support students with literacy and language-learning difficulties should be investigated. These include strategies such as use of repetition, putting words and phrases on the whiteboard, seeking full sentences instead of accepting one-word answers and giving sample sentences during written tasks. The teachers should discuss a range of support strategies and these should be reflected in work schemes.

## **SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- The provision for Irish in the school timetable is satisfactory, with all year-groups having five class periods per week. Those undertaking the Leaving Certificate Applied have three class periods per week.
- Learning support lessons are provided during Irish lessons to those with an exemption from studying Irish.
- As Kennedy College is a small school, students are taught in mixed ability classes, a practice that creates challenges for teachers. Efforts are made to cater for the needs of all students, for example, an extra class is organised for those undertaking higher level in state examinations. The enthusiasm of teachers in this respect is commended.
- Fifth year and sixth-year students have oral examinations at present. It is recommended that this best practice be implemented from first year onward and that the students are empowered from the beginning of school to speak simple Irish as far as their ability allows. The result of these oral examinations should be presented as a separate mark in school reports.
- A Gaeltacht scholarship scheme is currently in place in the school and an effort is made to send four students to the Gaeltacht every year. These efforts are greatly commended.
- Good efforts are made in the school to celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge by organising events such as a quiz and an art competition. It is recommended that ways in which these events could be extended, be discussed. It is recommended that the views of both students and staff are sought in relation to this.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The teachers work collaboratively and it was clear that there was good communication between them on a professional basis. One of the teachers is nominated as department coordinator but, in reality, the work is divided between them.
- It was reported that the Irish teachers have regular meetings on an informal basis and a formal meeting a couple of times a year. It is recommended that teaching methodologies and the use of ICT teaching resources are included as an item for discussion at each meeting.
- A plan for the teaching and learning of Irish was provided on the day of the inspection. Although the work and effort carried out on the current plan is commended, work schemes should be set out on an integrated basis containing the following details: topics or themes to be taught, use of methodologies, use of ICT and other teaching resources, learning intentions and assessment methods.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, the deputy principal and the subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

*Published September 2016*

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The content of the inspection report was found to be both positive and helpful. It facilitates staff of Kennedy College in continuing to focus our efforts to encourage Oral Irish students to embrace our Irish language and culture through a variety of teaching methodologies.

**Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection**

Kennedy College Gaeilge teachers agreed to make every effort to use different teaching methodologies in the Teaching of Gaeilge to our students in an effort to broaden their learning outcomes.

We will try to use more Information Technology resources in our Gaeilge classes.

We will continue to promote oral Irish in our classrooms.