

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT

Gairmschool Éinne
Cill Rónain, Inis Mór, Oileáin Árann
Co na Gaillimhe

Roll Number: 71300M

Date of inspection: 25th October 2011



A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S

REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN IRISH

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	25th October 2011
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during two class periods• Review of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Very good and exemplary methodologies of teaching and learning were in use in all lessons.
- The amount of authentic material and posters displayed on the walls of the classroom where Irish was being taught was limited.
- Good practices were developed for formative and summative assessment.
- There is good provision for teaching and learning of Irish in the school.
- Very good progress has been made in the planning process for teaching and learning of the language.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that a strategic plan be created to guide the development of Irish at classroom level and at the whole school level within the framework of the school's Irish policy.
 - It would be worth while including an oral examination in the summative assessment of students and reference to students' oral competency be communicated the reports issuing to homes.
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INTRODUCTION

This is a Gaeltacht vocational school and Irish is the language of the school. There are 80 students attending the school from various sociolinguistic backgrounds. The Transition Year (TY) is an obligatory programme for the students of this school and learners come from the mainland each year to follow the TY programme as part of '*Scéim na bhFoghlaimoirí Gaeilge*'.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching and learning methodologies employed were very good or exemplary in all lessons.
- These methodologies incorporated all learning styles and integrated the four main language skills during the lessons. Good communicative opportunities were created and the use of information and communications technology (ICT) contributed to the students' learning.
- Effective use of group work and the students' individual needs were well served while completing collaborative tasks. It is recommended that a time should be set for the task in advance and that feedback from the groups should be recorded as an affirmation of the students' work as well as providing a written record of the groups' learning outcomes.
- It would be worthwhile to direct the students' attention to new words and new grammatical points which arise in lessons by providing a visual record on the board. This practice would enhance the students' spelling ability and grammatical accuracy on a continuous basis.
- Learning objectives were shared with the students and a summary of the learning outcomes was undertaken at the end of one lesson, as is appropriate. It is recommended that learning objectives be differentiated, to cater in particular for pupils with higher ability in the language.
- A variety of teacher student questions types were employed by which students gained an understanding of the a poem in their own words. It was clear from the students' participation that they had a very good understanding of the poem's subject by the end of the class. This approach is recommended instead of giving a class a simplified version of a piece of poetry prepared in advance.
- The amount of authentic material and posters displayed on the walls of the classroom in which Irish was being taught was limited. It is recommended that a more stimulating environment be created for teaching and learning the language.
- Classroom management was very good in all lessons, with the participation of each student in the learning process encouraged.
- There was a stimulating learning atmosphere in the lessons characterised by high expectations for learning.
- It is commendable that worksheets in one lesson were differentiated in order to serve different learning needs of the students.
- The homework assigned was very appropriate as a testing task and as an extending task of the learning done during the lessons.
- In a random sample of students' copybooks reviewed very good developmental had been completed.

- It was clear from the copybooks that the formal grammar is used. The following is recommended as an alternative approach: teaching grammatical points in the communicative context of the piece and returning again and again to key points during specific time periods.
- Good practice in relation to mechanical corrections was in evidence in students' work. It was reported that oral formative feedback was provided on substantial pieces of work. It is recommended that a written summary of this feedback be also provided on students' work, as a record for revision.
- In the case of Leaving Certificate students' copybooks reviewed, students were making very basic spelling errors. It is recommended that strategies be devised to address this and to encourage greater responsibility among the students for the correction process.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is very good provision for the teaching and learning of Irish in regards to the number of class periods, continuity throughout the cycle and the additional support provided to students with special educational needs (SEN) or with poor competency in the language.
- There has been very good attendance by the Irish staff at the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) in-service courses and other external courses. Continuing professional development (CPD) is organised at a whole school level on various educational themes.
- The school participates in a good range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities, including music, literary and radio competitions. In-school projects are organised which contribute positively to the amount of Irish used in the school environment. The language is to be seen in places throughout the school, however there is scope to add to this.
- There are good facilities and resources in the school which support the teaching and learning of Irish and these support mechanisms are updated on a continuous basis.
- There is a comprehensive whole school policy for homework which is included in the Irish plan, as appropriate. It is recommended that practices regarding homework journals be included as part of this policy.
- It was evident from a random sample of the homework journals reviewed that homework is being assigned regularly.
- An oral examination is not included in the summative assessment of students' and is not specified in the reports sent home. This practice should be reviewed.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The Irish plan was of a very high standard in relation to the organisational details of the department and the curricular plans. It is commendable that the plan is reviewed ongoing basis.
- Planning for the thematic integration of the four language skills is in an initial stage of development. This work should be guided by expressing language themes in terms of student learning outcomes across the language skills. that the themes be set in the form of the learning objectives over the four language skills.

- It is recommended that a strategic plan to guide the development of Irish be created within the school's Irish policy.
- The plan for TY programme for Irish is very general. It is recommended that this plan be reviewed in order to serve the students of this school and the language needs of learners who come to the island for the year.
- Short-term planning and preparation for all lessons was of a high standard and in consequence lesson material was presented in a clear, structured and developmental manner.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and 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; a response was not received from the board.