

POLICY ON GAELTACHT EDUCATION 2017-2022

GAELTACHT SCHOOL RECOGNITION SCHEME

**GUIDANCE NOTE FOR GAELTACHT PRIMARY
AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS
2018-19**

**ADVISORY VISITS OF THE INSPECTORATE
&
THE USE OF THE ADDITIONAL PART-TIME HOURS
TO SUPPORT IRISH**

An tAonad um Oideachas Gaeltachta



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills**

1. Introduction

This guide provides information for principals/schools on:

- 1) **the advisory visits** the Inspectorate will conduct during the school year 2018/19 to support schools participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme (the *Scheme*).
- 2) **the use of the additional part-time hours to support Irish** that are provided for schools participating in the *Scheme*.
- 3) **the resources and support materials** available to support schools in the *Scheme*.

During the school year 2018/19, schools in the *Scheme* will be implementing the actions to meet the language-based criteria for immersion education. The Inspectorate advisory visits will take place alongside the professional development provided by An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) and other support services¹.

Each school participating in the *Scheme* will be required to implement and monitor on an ongoing basis its action plan for immersion education. The six-step school self-evaluation (SSE) process will continue and the publication *Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Primary/Post-Primary Schools (LOS)* will underpin this work. It is important that the targets and actions are in line with the language-based criteria (13 criteria for primary schools and 11 criteria for post-primary schools). The inspectors will provide advice and support for schools on their development journey to strengthen the quality of education through the medium of Irish in order to obtain recognition as a Gaeltacht school.

Section 1: The Advisory Visits 2018/19

1.1 The purpose of the advisory visits

The purpose of the Inspectorate's advisory visits is to support schools in the *Scheme* to implement their action plans, to strengthen the quality of education through the medium of Irish, and to increase the use of Irish in the school community.

The inspector's role during these advisory visits is to: encourage schools, ask and answer questions, provide support, advice and affirmation, monitor progress, acknowledge good practice, and support schools in addressing the challenges on their journey towards achieving recognition as a Gaeltacht school.

¹ **Other national support services for schools:**

- Professional Development Service for Teachers (www.pdst.ie)
- Junior Cycle for Teachers (www.jct.ie)
- Centre for School Leadership (www.cslireland.ie)

1.2 Procedure

Preparation for the visit

It would be helpful for primary and post-primary schools to be familiar with the following documents:

Primary Schools:

- Department of Education and Skills (2018). Circular 0021/2018. *Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme for Primary Schools and Special Schools in Gaeltacht Language-Planning Areas - Next Implementation Phase (April 2018 to end of 2018/19 school year)* (www.education.ie)
- Department of Education and Skills (2018). *Draft-Guide for Gaeltacht Primary Schools – Immersion Education: Indicators of Good Practice* (www.education.ie)
- Department of Education and Skills (2017). Circular 0033/2017. *Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme for Primary Schools and Special Schools in Gaeltacht Language-Planning Areas - Initial Implementation Phase (April 2017 to June 2018)* (www.education.ie)
- Department of Education and Skills (2016). Circular 0016/2018: *Re-Engaging with the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Process in Primary Schools* (www.education.ie)
- Department of Education and Skills (2016). Circular 0039/2016: *Continuing Implementation of School Self-Evaluation 2016-2020: Primary Schools and Special Schools* (www.education.ie)
- Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills (2016). *Looking at Our School 2016: Quality Framework for Primary Schools* (www.schoolself-evaluation.ie)
- Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills (2016). *School Self-Evaluation: Guidelines 2016-2020: Primary Schools* (www.schoolself-evaluation.ie)
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2015). *Primary Language Curriculum* (www.ncca.ie)
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2009). *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* (www.ncca.ie)

Post-Primary Schools

- Department of Education and Skills (2018). Circular 0022/2018. *Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme for Post-Primary Schools in Gaeltacht Language-Planning Areas - Next Implementation Phase (April 2018 to end of 2018/19 school year)* (www.education.ie)
- Department of Education and Skills (2018). *Draft-Guide for Gaeltacht Post-Primary Schools – Immersion Education: Indicators of Good Practice* (www.education.ie)
- Department of Education and Skills (2017). Circular 0034/2017. *Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme for Post-Primary Schools in Gaeltacht Language-Planning Areas - Initial Implementation Phase (April 2017 to June 2018)* (www.education.ie)
- Department of Education and Skills (2016). Circular 0040/2016: *Continuing Implementation of School Self-Evaluation 2016-2020: Post-Primary Schools* (www.education.ie)
- Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills (2016). *Looking at Our School 2016: Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools* (www.schoolself-evaluation.ie)
- Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills (2016). *School Self-Evaluation: Guidelines 2016-2020: Post-Primary Schools* (www.schoolself-evaluation.ie)
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2017). *Specification for Junior Cycle Irish: Irish-medium schools (L1)* (www.ncca.ie)

1.3 Advisory Visit

- The inspector will phone the school to arrange a date and time for the visit. The purpose of the visit, the specific language criteria to be met, as identified by the school, and the aspects of the action plan to be achieved during the current school year, will be discussed.
- The inspector will confirm by email the arrangements agreed with the principal.
- The advisory visit will take place during school time. The duration of the visit will be between one and a half hours and two hours.

- The inspector will meet the principal; the school will have the option to also have another member of staff present.
- Schools will be at different stages on the journey to provide immersion education. Advice will be provided to schools, as requested, and the following points might be included in that advice:
 - Provide guidance for the school on the priorities for the year's work in 2018-19, the targets identified and the actions to be implemented, taking into consideration the current situation in the school in relation to immersion education.
 - Discussion with the school to establish if:
 - the priorities are appropriate for the school's linguistic context
 - the actions outlined are suitable to achieve the targets set
 - teachers have identified common practice and professional discussion is taking place
 - the role of the individual teacher in implementing the specific targets in the classroom is clearly outlined
 - appropriate teaching and learning strategies have been outlined
 - differentiation has been included for native speakers, for learners, for pupils/students with different abilities
 - good practice on immersion education already occurring in the school is acknowledged
 - the *Primary Language Curriculum / New Junior Cycle Framework* and *Junior Cycle Specification for L1 Irish* is/are being used
 - the six-step school self-evaluation process and the *Quality Framework for Primary/Post-Primary Schools(2016)* are being used (*Looking at Our School 2016: Quality Framework for Primary/Post-Primary Schools*)
 - leadership is being developed amongst staff to support the implementation of the action plan
 - the intention is to provide the whole-school community with a summary of the school self-evaluation report and the school improvement plan and if consideration has been given to the best means of providing a brief, clear and meaningful summary.
 - there is cooperation between the school and the local language-planning committee
 - appropriate planning has occurred regarding the effective use of the additional language hours for teaching and learning in the immersion education setting
 - the *Draft-Guide for Gaeltacht Primary/Post-Primary School Immersion: Indicators of Good Practice* is being used.
- The additional supports and resources that the school is receiving, and the use being made of them will be discussed (for example, COGG / the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) / the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) / the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT); the inclusion Support Service (ISS); networks/Education and Training Boards (ETB) / trustee bodies / management bodies/ committees/ local organisations /agencies and/or other services.
- A written record of the meeting will not be provided for the school but the principal will have the option to take notes during the discussion if he/she wishes to do so.

Section 2: The additional Part-Time Hours for Language Support in Irish (Circulars 0021/2018 and 0022/2018)

The additional part-time language hours, intended to support Irish, must be used to provide for the language needs of pupils/students, native speakers and learners of Irish, to develop and enrich their Irish language skills (Circular 0021/2018 and Circular 0022/2018).

2.1 Ways in which the additional language hours can be used to develop and enrich pupils'/students' language skills

The following approaches are identified to support the implementation of the additional language hours and to cultivate pupils'/students' fluency, enrichment and accuracy in Irish:

- cultivating language enrichment amongst native speakers as a group within the mainstream class during group teaching or in groups withdrawn from the class, as necessary
- designing and implementing, with the mainstream teacher, an early-intervention literacy programme in Irish in infant classes. Particular attention will be focused on the specific language needs of native speakers and learners of Irish
- planning, in association with the mainstream teachers, to implement a differentiated literacy and numeracy programme in the context of immersion education
- developing jointly with the principal and the school staff, pupils'/students' cognitive language (i.e. the terminology of the various subjects) to support subject-based language in other curricular areas
- providing support for the *Aistear* programme and for imaginative play through the medium of Irish to facilitate a wide range of learning experiences in infant classes
- supporting the development of pupils'/students' reading skills and language enrichment
- supporting the development of pupils'/students' writing skills and language accuracy
- conducting formative/summative/diagnostic/standardised assessment of pupils'/students' language ability and tracking their language, in conjunction with the class teacher/learning-support teacher/resource teacher
- co-operating with the various partners for language support to clarify the roles of the teachers and the language assistants (if this service is available in the school) in order to provide differentiated language support for pupils/students.

School leadership and management should monitor on an ongoing basis the way in which the hours assigned to support Irish are used to improve the quality of learning, and to review accordingly the effectiveness of the provision.

Section 3: Resources and Materials to Support Schools

3.1 List of resources and support materials

The following are amongst the resources available to support the schools in the *Scheme*:

- An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (www.cogg.ie)
- Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (2014). *Gaeltacht Act, 2012: Language Planning Guidelines* (www.ahrrga.gov.ie)
- Education Act 1998: Section 9 (f) and (h)
- Gaeltacht Act 2012: Section 12 (b)
- Gaeltacht Education Unit, Department of Education and Skills (www.education.ie)
- Government of Ireland (2010). *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030*.
- National Educational Psychological Service (2017). *A Balanced Approach to Literacy Development in the Early Years of Primary School: NEPS Good Practice Guide* (www.neps.ie)
- Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) (www.pdst.ie)
- Séideán Sí (www.seideansi.ie)
- State Examinations' Commission (www.examinations.ie)
- Údarás na Gaeltachta (www.udaras.ie)

3.2 Additional information

Enquiries regarding the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme or other enquiries related to the *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022* may be forwarded electronically to aog@education.gov.ie or by regular post to:

Gaeltacht Education Unit
Department of Education and Skills
Block 3, Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 RC96.