

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

**Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT**

**Coláiste Ghobnait
Inis Oirr, Oileáin Árann
County Galway**

Roll number: 71370K

Date of inspection: 24 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	24 October
Inspection Activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with studentts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during two class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Very good teaching and learning methodologies were used in the classes during the inspection.
- Good assessment practices have been developed for all year groups.
- Satisfactory provision is made for Irish on the timetable and a broad range of aids and resources has been developed for language teaching and learning.
- A very good standard pertained to planning for teaching and learning Irish.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It would be beneficial to make more use of assessment for learning (AfL) methods.
 - The oral competency of learners should also be included in reports which are sent home.
 - It is recommended that an action plan be designed based on the priorities of the department itself and on the main findings of this report in order to further develop the Irish department.
 - A specific number of learning objectives appropriate to the length of the lesson would greatly enhance short term planning.
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INTRODUCTION

This is an all Irish school situated in a Gaeltacht area. Irish is the language of instruction, communication and administration within the school. There are 26 students attending the school from various sociolinguistic backgrounds. The school management aims to develop the Transition Year (TY) programme as part of the school curriculum in the future.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching and learning methods used in the lessons during the inspections were of a very good or good standard.
- The best methodologies employed included; opportunities created for students to practice both their productive and receptive oral skills, to develop their reading skills, to gain an understanding of a poem with the aid of a series of very good quality pictures. A prose story, the conditional mood and indirect speech were integrated well.
- Very good use was made of task based work in one class where the students enthusiastically participated in the tasks. The teacher attended to students' learning needs as they completed tasks.
- Good links were forged with previous student learning and with future lessons as well as with the students' own life experience.
- Good practices were employed in the use of Irish in all classes. Vocabulary was skilfully simplified thus avoiding overuse of translation and students' attention was drawn to grammatical points as well as to new vocabulary noted during the lessons. It is recommended, that when teaching vocabulary, the words be linked to other words which the learners already know or that the new vocabulary be grouped so that the greatest learning possibilities may be achieved by every student.
- Classroom management was good in all lessons. All teachers gave very supportive affirmation to the quality of the students' efforts and opinions.
- It was clear from the random sample of homework journals which were collected in all lesson that homework was regularly assigned and that this was recorded in Irish as appropriate. It is recommended that a variety of language skills be incorporated in homework tasks.
- A random sample of students' copybooks and folders was reviewed and most of these contained a substantial amount of developmental work. Students' work was regularly monitored and good techniques were also evident in the corrections which were not excessive and which gave the learner an insight into the basis of errors made.
- Greater use should be made of AfL methods as an aid to learning. It is also recommended that strategies be devised to give the students more responsibility in the assessment process, including self-assessment.
- The students' organisational skills were being fostered in the learners' work and the extra notes in some of the folders were of a high standard.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Satisfactory provision is made for teaching and learning the language in the timetable.
- All teachers of Irish in the school are graduates of Irish and the majority of them have the opportunity to teach both cycles and the different examination levels. Every staff member would greatly benefit from having this experience.
- Two of the teachers have attended external Irish courses organised by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). It is commendable that the methodologies recommended at these courses are in use in the classroom.
- Resources which support the teaching and learning of Irish are readily available to teachers. The department has developed a broad range of resources and there is a library in one of the rooms in which Irish is regularly taught. It is commendable that the school intends to develop a library. It is recommended that during this process, reference be made to the list of resources available to post-primary schools which has been compiled by <http://www.cogg.ie>
- Students are given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities organised by the school, the vocational education committee (VEC) or by organisations such as Gael Linn. The school is to be highly commended for encouraging students to take part in these activities which greatly enrich the learners' experience of the language and of Irish culture.
- All students in the school have summative house examinations three times during the school year. It is commendable that oral skills are included in these assessments for all year groups. There is also regular testing in the different language skills. The oral competency of learners should also be included in reports issuing to homes.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A very good standard pertained to planning for teaching and learning Irish. A comprehensive description on the work and practices of the department is included in the organisational section of the plan. It would be worthwhile to also include the school's policy for Irish and homework in the Irish plan.
- Very good work has been carried out in long-term curricular plans to the extent that themes are taught in an integrated manner. Literature and grammar should be included in this integrated planning.
- A review of curricular plans is recommended so that themes taught are articulated in terms of learning objectives and the language functions which the students will be able to fulfil. These learning objectives would provide a framework within which the department could design assessment methods.
- It is recommended that an action plan be designed based on the priorities of the department itself and on the main findings of this report in order to further develop the Irish department.
- All teachers had prepared well for their lessons in terms of worksheets and PowerPoint presentations; these greatly enhanced the students' participation and learning.

- Very good short-term planning had been done for most classes which contained clear learning objectives, characterised by a purposeful pace and a developmental order. It is important that during short-term planning a specific number of learning objectives appropriate to the length of the lesson be chosen. In this way, the core learning objectives of the lesson would be achieved and revised during the lesson.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal 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.