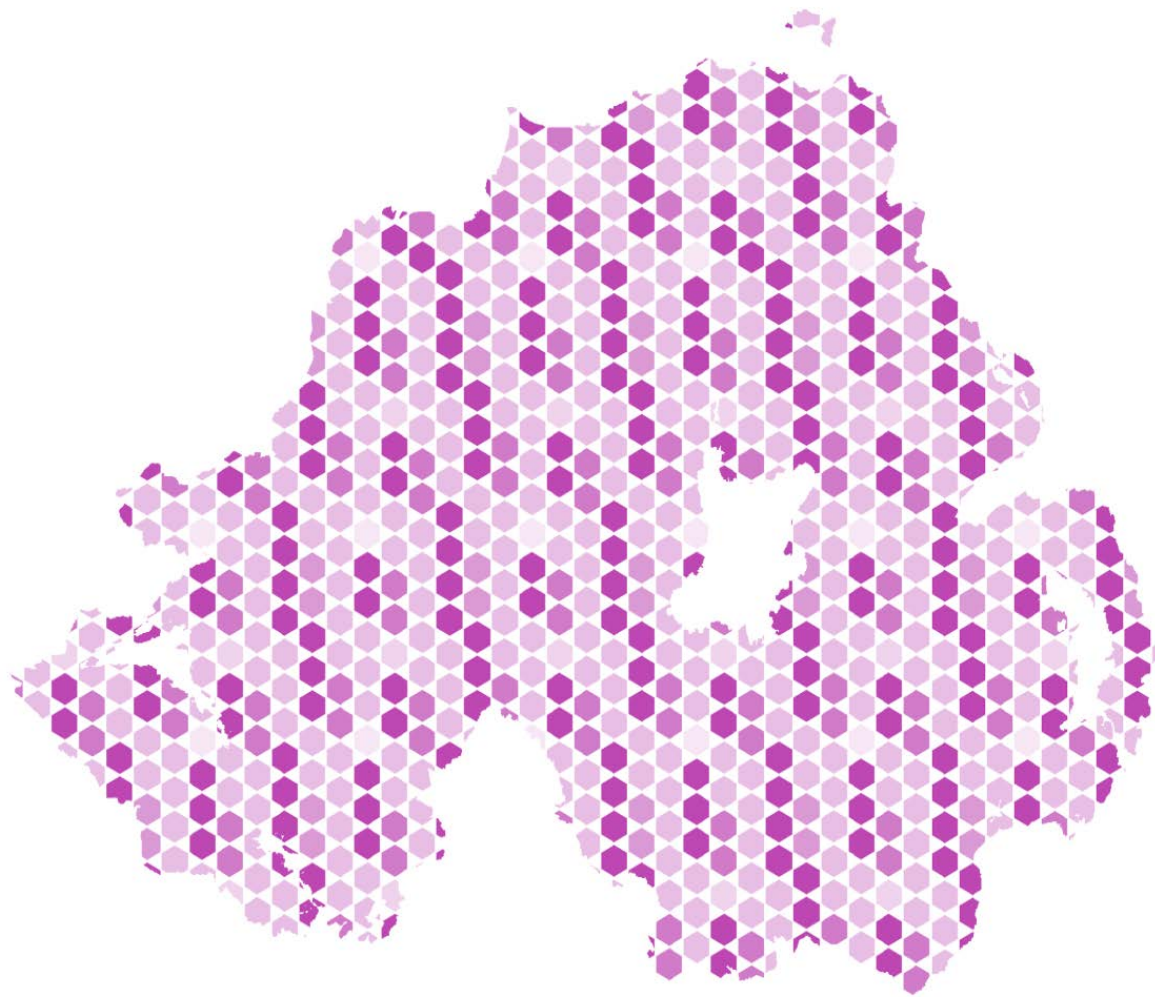


CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

An evaluation of the summer
language learning programme
provided by Foras na Gaeilge
in 2012-13

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------|
| Almost/nearly all | - | more than 90% |
| Most | - | 75%-90% |
| A majority | - | 50%-74% |
| A significant minority | - | 30%-49% |
| A minority | - | 10%-29% |
| Very few/a small number | - | less than 10% |

Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

| DESCRIPTOR |
|----------------|
| Outstanding |
| Very Good |
| Good |
| Satisfactory |
| Inadequate |
| Unsatisfactory |

Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of DCAL funded bodies, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the Inspectorate's publication Quality Indicators for Culture Arts and Leisure organisations <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/support-material/support-material-department-of-culture-arts-and-leisure/quality-indicators-for-culture-arts-leisure-organisations.pdf>

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from the observation of sessions, the participant's work and from relevant documentation. In addition, the inspection team held discussions with groups of the participants, facilitators and programme managers.

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1. Context

Foras na Gaeilge was established in 1999 as part of the Good Friday Agreement and is responsible for the promotion of the Irish language throughout Ireland. It is co-sponsored by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the Republic of Ireland. Foras na Gaeilge provides funding for suitable Irish language summer camps for young people, 3-18 years old, living outside of the Gaeltacht areas, which aim to strengthen their proficiency in the use of the Irish language through a range of activities.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) evaluated the Irish language summer camps funded by Foras na Gaeilge during 2012-13.

2. Key findings

The staff in the summer camps spoke highly of the support and communication from Foras na Gaeilge. Across the summer camps, the staff, building on their previous experience, have developed robust systems of administration and registration to plan and evaluate better their programmes. The staff have clear roles and responsibilities, and they maintain good levels of communication with each other, the young people and their parents.

The development of the young people's language skills is well-integrated into the projects, and is used naturally and competently in informal settings to encourage and inspire the young people. For example, during the out-of-centre activities, those young people with less developed Irish language skills are supported well to use basic conversational Irish. In the best practice, the staff set appropriate targets for each age group and assess the outcomes and achievements, which are celebrated well with the young people and their parents.

Throughout the provision, the young people, who are from a variety of social backgrounds, develop and sustain new friendships. They enjoy participating in the broad range of activities, and through these they are improving their language skills. In addition, they benefit from the opportunities for personal and social development, which enhance their self-esteem and confidence.

There are well-embedded opportunities for young people to develop their leadership skills; and across the summer camps older participants assume greater responsibility for their younger peers, as well as developing their own language skills. These young people are good role models for the younger children and inspire them to develop their skills in a similar way.

In the best practice, there is a very good variety of approaches and differentiated activities to encourage creativity, which is well-matched to the young people's abilities and needs. There is a well-balanced programme of language development providing for progression, which includes: storytelling; drama; arts and crafts; and music, to promote creative thinking and greater self-confidence.

A majority of the projects provide relevant age-appropriate activities, which are well-structured and resourced. The summer camp staff make effective use of visits to local educational venues, such as the Ulster Museum and Titanic Belfast, which are interesting, engaging and reinforce many aspects of the formal curriculum.

The summer camps are well connected to other Irish language provision in the local areas, and they have forged effective links with other agencies, including the local youth service. These links provide opportunities for the young people's involvement with their peers; and to showcase their outcomes and achievements, for example, participating in singing and drama competitions. A particular strength of the programmes is the use of Irish in social settings outside of the classroom or home, embedding the use of Irish in the everyday experiences of these young people.

All of the summer camps celebrate the achievements of their young people, and they are committed to use their reflections and those of the parents, to develop and improve the provision. The staff and the young people report that the programmes are valued by parents and that there are high levels of mutual support. The programmes are well led; they meet the expectations of the young people, their parents and the summer camp organisers. As a consequence, the young people are developing appropriate language skills in non-formal settings commensurate with their age and abilities.

3. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of provision provided by this organisation is very good. The organisation is meeting very effectively needs of the young people; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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