

# Gael Linn

## A survey on the experience of teachers involved in **SCOIL SPREAGTHA**

an Irish language scheme in English-  
medium primary schools.

Le Stiofán Carson

i gcomhar le Gael Linn



### Scoil Spreagtha



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# ABSTRACT

NI is the only part of these islands where children do not have the opportunity to learn a second language at primary level. This means that NI has the lowest period of compulsory language learning within the education system in all of Europe. Although language learning is not part of the NI Curriculum, certain schools do provide the opportunity to learn another language.

Gael Linn has a project called 'Scoil Spreagtha' which aims to promote learning Irish within English-medium primary schools. Gael Linn organises this project in collaboration with Ulster University and Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin in Derry. This report focuses on the background and approach of Scoil Spreagtha, on the support and resources that are available to teachers and on the value of the scheme in the schools (according to teachers).

An interview was carried out with Séamas Mac Eochaidh, the education policy officer for Gael Linn and a questionnaire was sent to every school that was part of the scheme, to gather information associated with the teachers' experience. 82 schools were part of the scheme, and 45 schools completed the questionnaire. Irish is taught in most of the classes (ie. from P1 to P7) in 77.8% of the schools. There is a considerable difference between the standard of Irish that the teachers possess in the different schools. The teachers had a number of suggestions with regards to resources, support and teaching within the scheme to improve it.

Based on the results of this survey, it is clear that the teachers wish for this scheme to be made available next year and it is recommended that language teachers are provided to offer practical teaching support to schools, especially for the schools which do not have Irish-speaking teachers. It is recommended that training for the teachers would be useful; both training associated with the Irish language and training on other strategies, to teach and promote Irish both, inside and outside the classroom.



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Scoil Spreagtha

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# PREFACE

In the first instance, I would like to thank Doctor Gearóid Ó Domagáin for all his support throughout this project.

I would also like to thank Séamas Mac Eochaidh for his help and support.

I was delighted to see the valuable feedback, from the teachers involved in 'Scoil Spreagtha' within their own schools, as I was working on this project. I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to learn Irish, and you are giving this opportunity to your students, which I am sure will have a lasting effect on them. I praise the work that you are all doing and I hope that the results from this piece of work will be useful for the scheme in the future.



**Scoil Spreagtha**



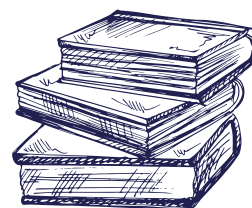
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|      |                                            |
|------|--------------------------------------------|
| BBC  | British Broadcasting Corporation           |
| KS   | Key Stage                                  |
| GCSE | General Certificate of Secondary Education |
| NI   | NI                                         |
| UK   | United Kingdom                             |
| TELT | Teachers Learning to Teach Languages       |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

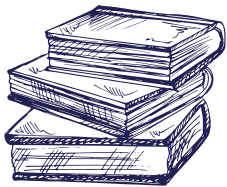
## 1.1 Language learning in the NI Education System

Most of the schools in NI are grant-funded schools. This includes controlled schools, schools overseen by the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools and voluntary grammar schools as well. There are integrated schools whose aim is that 40% of the children will be from the Protestant background, 40% of the children will be from the Catholic background and 20% will be from other backgrounds. There are Irish-medium schools and special schools that provide education for children with special needs. All of the grant-funded schools follow the NI Revised Curriculum. There are also independent schools which do not receive funding from the state, and are not required to follow the curriculum (NI Direct, 2023).



The number of students in Irish-medium schools is increasing and there are now approximately 7000 students attending Irish-medium schools (Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, 2024). There are 30 Irish-medium schools (28 primary schools and 2 secondary schools) in NI and 10 units or streams which are part of an English-medium school (7 primary schools and 3 secondary schools) (The Department for Education, 2024).

Outside of the Irish-medium schools, learning another language is not compulsory with the exception of Key Stage 3 (11-14 years of age). This means that NI has the shortest period of compulsory language learning as part of the education system in the continent of Europe. (Collen, 2023). Although it is not compulsory, certain schools teach other languages. As part of the report 'Language Trend NI' a questionnaire was sent to primary schools about teaching languages and 52% of the schools that responded stated that they were teaching another language. Although this figure is positive, only 10% of the schools filled in the questionnaire, and it is right therefore to be cautious about the results (Collen, 2023).



Although learning another language is compulsory at Key Stage 3, the schools themselves make the decisions about the number of languages that the children learn, as well as the amount of time that is available for language learning. The number of students studying Irish at GCSE level or for A Level is not growing within the English-medium secondary schools (Collen, 2023). The number of students studying Irish fell by 43% from 2665 students in 2007 to 1519 students in 2021. Although the number of students studying Irish at A Level is not decreasing, 137 of the 325 students that were doing A level Irish were attending an Irish-medium school (Tennyson, 2023). The same is the case for the other languages as there has been a considerable decline in the number of students studying French as a GCSE subject from approximately 14,000 in 1995/96 to approx. 4000 in 2021/22 (Collen, 2023).



## 1.2 Provision of language learning in primary schools in NI, in Ireland and in Wales.

Evidence shows that children under the age of 10 are able to learn another language more easily than people in other age groups (Ghasemi and Hashemi, 2011). There are other advantages associated with learning another language at a young age. It is shown that learning another language helps with cognitive development and that children are more positive towards learning another language (Chen, et al., 2022; Pan, 2023). Therefore, there is a strong rationale supporting the provision to learn another language within that age group. Learning another language is compulsory as part of the National Primary Curriculum in England and there is a 1+2 approach in place in Scotland. That means that primary school children start learning another language in Primary 1 and then start learning another language in Primary 5. It is compulsory for children in Wales to learn Welsh (McKendry, 2020). As well as that, learning Irish is compulsory in primary schools in the Republic of Ireland (An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta, 2007). That means that NI is the only part of these islands where a second language is not available at primary level.

There was a project available in NI that provided language learning in primary schools called 'The Primary Modern Languages Project'. This project started in 2007 and when it ceased in 2015, 425 primary schools were part of the project. The project was only available in Key Stage 1 within the schools. Spanish provision was focused on within this project as McKendry highlights, but this also serves to highlight the additional difficulty associated with the Irish language:

This author heard the following utterances from Education and Library Board officers promoting Spanish:

'French has had its chance. It's time to do something else'.

'German is too difficult for Primary'.

'The problem is Irish. If we could get rid of it'. (McKendry, 2020).

The Irish language and linguistic matters in general are a source of controversy in NI as the sample above illustrates. This impacts the progress of languages generally. In spite of that, learning Irish was available in 84 schools as part of this project. There was only one integrated school registered for Irish classes, with not a single controlled school taking part in Irish classes as part of this project (McKendry, 2020).

It is thought that the provision of language learning in primary schools promotes a positive outlook to languages in Key Stage 4 but there is no transition process from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 in place within NI with regards to languages (Collen et al., 2017). This project (The Primary Modern Languages Project) is mentioned as part of the 'NI Languages Strategy' which recommends that the project should operate at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and it also recommends that language learning should be part of the Revised NI Curriculum (Johnston, 2012), but these recommendations were not put into effect.

### 1.3 Schemes outside the education system

There are schools which provide language education for primary school children as part of the timetable or as part of an afterschool club but there is no set curriculum to follow for this (Collen, 2023; Totten, 2024).

Regarding the Irish language, there are a few schemes that offered support to schools that are teaching Irish. There was a scheme called Léargas situated within Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin. This scheme was started in 2011, and it was providing Irish classes to approximately 1600 school children in Derry and Strabane when funding ceased in 2023. This scheme used visiting teachers to provide the classes (BBC, 2023a). The Irish language organisation Turas which is situated in east Belfast provides Irish language classes to local schools as well. They teach within controlled schools as well as within integrated schools. Although the organisation has been providing classes for schools for three years, they say that there is no curriculum available and there is a lack of resources that are suitable for English-medium primary schools (Carson, 2023).

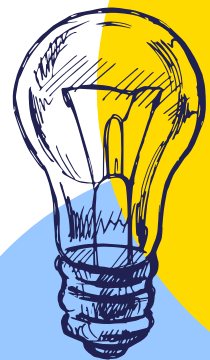
There is another project currently operating which aims to encourage Irish language learning within English-medium primary schools called 'Scoil Spreagtha'. Gael Linn organises this project in collaboration with Ulster University. Gael Linn is an Irish-language lead organisation that has a responsibility for education within the English-medium sector and for adults, as well as for providing opportunities for school students to use Irish (Foras na Gaeilge, 2024).

## 1.4 Aims

In this project, 'Scoil Spreagtha' will be evaluated. The following aspects of the scheme will be investigated:

1. The approach and background associated with the scheme
2. The support and resources that are available
3. The value of the scheme in the schools (according to the teachers)

Other schemes available in other countries (for instance in Scotland) will be looked at and a comparison made between them and this scheme in NI.



# 2. METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Interview with Séamas Mac Eochaidh, Gael Linn's Educational Policy Officer.

An interview was carried out with Séamas Mac Eochaidh, Gael Linn's Educational Policy Officer. The interview was carried out on Microsoft Teams and was recorded. The questions asked in the interview are in Table 2.1 below.



Tábla 2.1: Questions The Educational Policy Officer within Gael Linn was asked during the interview.

| Question Number | Question                                                                                 |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1               | What is your role within Gael Linn?                                                      |
| 2               | Describe 'Scoil Spreagtha' and compare this scheme with your other scheme 'Gaelbhratach' |
| 3               | What is the importance of this scheme?                                                   |
| 4               | How was this scheme started?                                                             |
| 5               | How did the schools register for this scheme?                                            |
| 6               | How many schools are part of the scheme and what type of schools are part of the scheme? |
| 7               | How is Irish taught within the schools that are part of the scheme?                      |
| 8               | Do the teachers that are involved in this scheme speak Irish?                            |
| 9               | What level of support is available to teachers involved in this scheme?                  |
| 10              | What do you think would be needed to develop this scheme?                                |

## 2.2 Design of the questionnaire

A decision was made to send a questionnaire out to every school that was part of the scheme to collect feedback (Brown, 2001). The content of the questionnaire was based on information that was acquired during the interview with Gael Linn's Education Policy Officer. The questionnaire was designed on Google Forms as it would be relatively easy to send the questionnaire to each teacher.

A link to the questionnaire was sent out to Séamas Mac Eochaidh who sent the link on to a teacher in every school. The teachers did not have to include their names or the names of their schools as part of this questionnaire.

## 2.3 Analysis

Google Sheets was used to analyse the results of the questionnaire. The results are displayed as a percentage of the schools or as a number of schools.

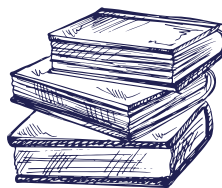
The key results from both the interview and the questionnaire are displayed in Chapter 3 below.



Scoil Spreagtha

# 3. RESULTS

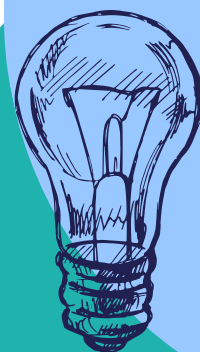
## 3.1 The background and approach of the scheme



The interview with Séamas Mac Eochaidh, Gael Linn's Educational Policy Officer gave an insight into the rationale of 'Scoil Spreagtha' and into how the scheme operates. Mac Eochaidh stated that 'Scoil Spreagtha' is a pilot scheme that is focusing on English-medium primary schools. Mac Eochaidh stated that a former school principal sent a letter to Ulster University recommending that an accredited scheme should be available to promote Irish in English-medium primary schools. This letter was sent on to Gael Linn as their responsibilities lie with the promotion of Irish in the English-medium sector.

During the interview, Mac Eochaidh stated that 'Scoil Spreagtha' tries to encourage and promote the Irish language in the school environment. He said that it was like another Gael Linn scheme called 'Gaelbhratach' (Gaelbhratach, 2023, The United Kingdom Government and the Government of Ireland, 2020) but he states the differences between Scoil Spreagtha and Gaelbhratach are due to the differences between the two education systems in NI and in the Republic of Ireland. This includes the fact that learning Irish is not compulsory in NI and that most teachers in NI do not speak Irish.

This scheme has been organised by Gael Linn, by Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin in Derry and by Ulster University. Gael Linn is involved in the organisation of the scheme, and they provide resources to support schools to promote Irish in the school environment. Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin provides resources from the Léargas scheme and the Ulster University's online system is used to host them for the schools. The Irish language department within Ulster University oversees the accreditation of the scheme and Ulster University hosts events at the end of the academic year to celebrate the schools who have achieved a 'Scoil Spreagtha' status.



It is a self-assessed scheme and the schools themselves provide evidence to Gael Linn which details how they have fulfilled the criteria, detailed in Table 3.2 below.

| Tábla 3.1: The criteria associated with 'Scoil Spreagtha' |                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Criteria number                                           | Description of the criteria                                                                                                                    |
| 1                                                         | School community (staff, pupils and parents) aware and supportive of scheme.                                                                   |
| 2                                                         | Pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of language learning in general, and the learning of Irish.                         |
| 3                                                         | Irish in use in the school environment (for example, any manner in which Gaeilge is visible, heard and used in school).                        |
| 4                                                         | Willingness to promote the learning of the language through provided Léargas resources at KS2                                                  |
| 5                                                         | Willingness to promote the learning of the language through song and/or poem at Foundations/KS1.                                               |
| 6                                                         | Scheme to be promoted on school social media platforms – Gaeilge to be used frequently as part of school posts on social media/school website. |
| 7                                                         | Participate in Seachtain na Gaeilge                                                                                                            |

### 3.2 Number of schools that were teaching Irish before they took part in the scheme and the reasons why the schools registered with the scheme.

A questionnaire was sent out to every school that was part of 'Scoil Spreagtha' and 45/82 schools responded (N=45 schools). Irish was not taught in 55.6% of the schools that completed the questionnaire before they were part of this scheme. Teachers were asked to explain why the school was registered with this scheme. Amongst the answers received, 2 schools stated that they were looking for another language to be available to the children in the school. 9 schools stated they were looking to promote the Irish language and Irish culture and 3 schools stated that there was an Irish-medium stream as part of the school, and they were looking to provide Irish within the English-medium side of the school as well.

### 3.3 Number of classes in which Irish is being taught.

It was decided to find out if Irish teaching was extensive within the schools that were part of the scheme or if it was limited to a couple of classes or year groups within the school. Figure 3.1 shows that Irish was taught in every single class in 68.9% of the schools and in most of the classes in 8.9% of the schools. Therefore, Irish was taught in every class/most of the classes in the majority of the schools.

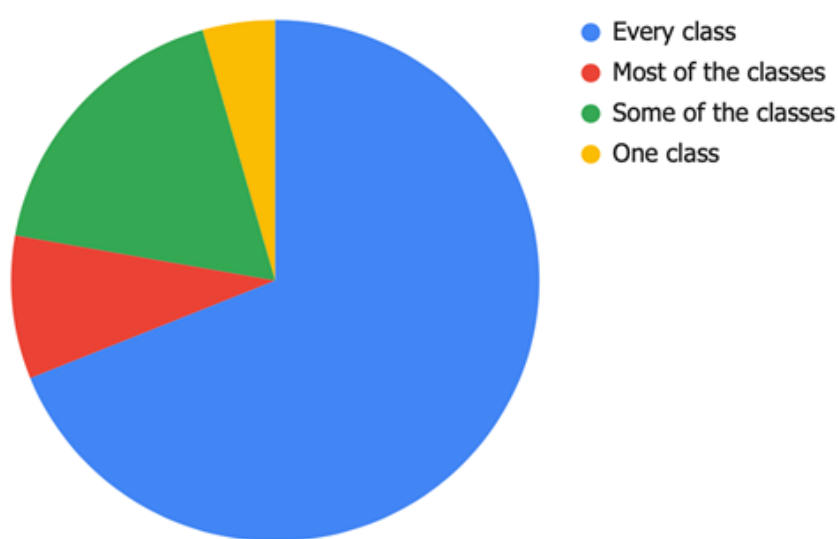


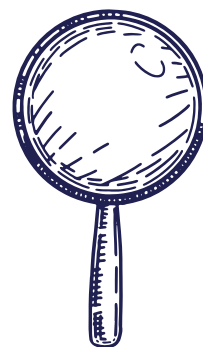
Figure 3.1: Number of classes in the schools where Irish was taught within them. Teachers were asked as part of the questionnaire in how many classes is Irish taught within the school. Irish was taught in every class in 68.9% of the schools (31/45), in most classes in 8.9% of the schools (4/45) and in some of the the classes in 17.8% of the schools (8/45) and in one class in 4.4% of the schools (2/45). N=45 schools.



### 3.4 The Irish language competency of the teachers in charge of the scheme.

An Irish language competency is not required for teachers involved in this scheme, but the decision was made to ask the schools about the highest level of Irish that teachers in each of the schools had. There are teacher(s) with a diploma in Irish in 4.4% of the schools, there are teacher(s) with an A level in Irish in 8.9% of them and there are teacher(s) with a GCSE in Irish in 13.3% of the schools in the scheme. Outside of formal qualifications, there are teacher(s) with informal experience in 20% of the schools. There are teachers with no ability in the Irish language in 15.6% of the schools.

As well as the standard of Irish that the teachers in the scheme possessed, the number of teachers with Irish-language ability was also of interest. Schools were asked to state what percentage of the teachers had an ability in Irish, as the number of teachers involved in the scheme would be different in every school; but this means that a school with only one teacher involved in the scheme could potentially show as 100% of the staff having an ability in the Irish language. 100% of the teachers had some ability in Irish in 4 schools, 90% of the teachers had some ability in Irish in 2 schools and 75% of the teachers had some ability in Irish in 4 schools as is seen in Figure 3.2. In 11 schools, 50% of the teachers had some ability in Irish with 25% of the teachers in another 11 schools having Irish ability. In 9 schools, 10% of the teachers involved in the scheme had Irish-language ability, with teachers having no ability in the Irish language in 4 schools. This result is in conflict with Figure 3.1 above which mentions that there are teachers with no ability in the Irish language in 15.6% of the schools (7 schools).



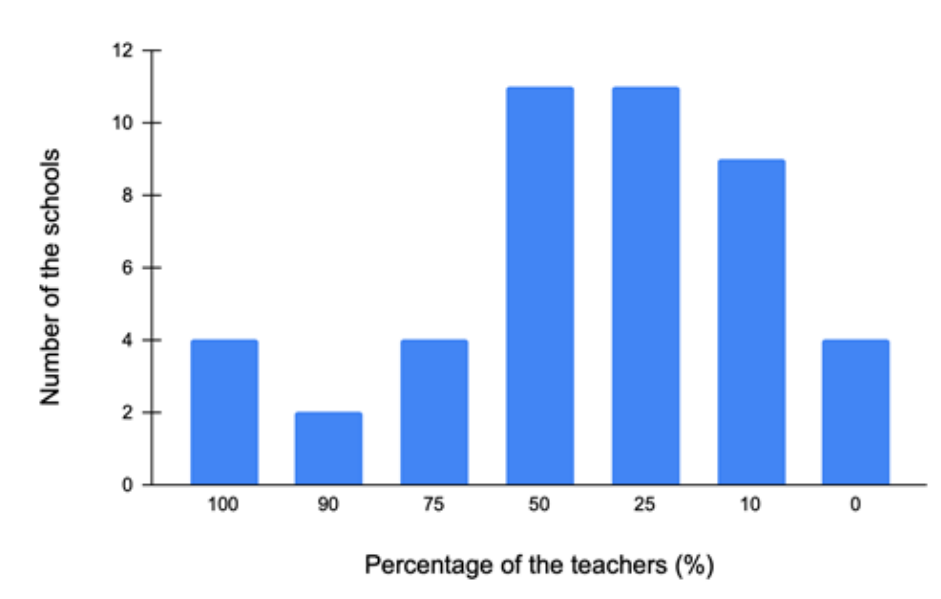


Figure 3.2: Number of teachers in the schools that have an ability in the Irish language. Teachers were asked as part of the questionnaire what percentage of the teachers that were part of this scheme had an ability in the Irish language. In 4 schools, 100% of the teachers have ability in the Irish language. 90% in 2 schools, 75% in 4 schools, 50% and 25% in 11 schools and 10 of them in 9 schools with none of the teachers having any ability in the Irish language in 4 schools. N=45 schools.

### 3.5 Teachers' opinion regarding the criteria, the resources and the support associated with 'Scoil Spreagtha'

There is a list of criteria associated with 'Scoil Spreagtha' and the schools must fulfill this criteria to achieve the status of being a 'Scoil Spreagtha'. A question was asked about the criteria of 'Scoil Spreagtha'. Most of the schools think that the criteria are realistic and only a minority think that they are unrealistic. Mac Eochaidh stated during the interview that resources are available to the schools that are part of this scheme. 88.9% of the schools said that the resources were either very suitable or suitable, 6.7% said that the resources were suitable to a certain point and 4.4% said that the resources could be better as is seen in Figure 3.3. Figure 3.4 focuses on the opinions of the teachers regarding the support that they get from Gael Linn. 77.7% of the schools said that the support that they get from Gael Linn is very helpful or helpful but 22.2% of the schools said that the support they get could be better or that additional support is needed.

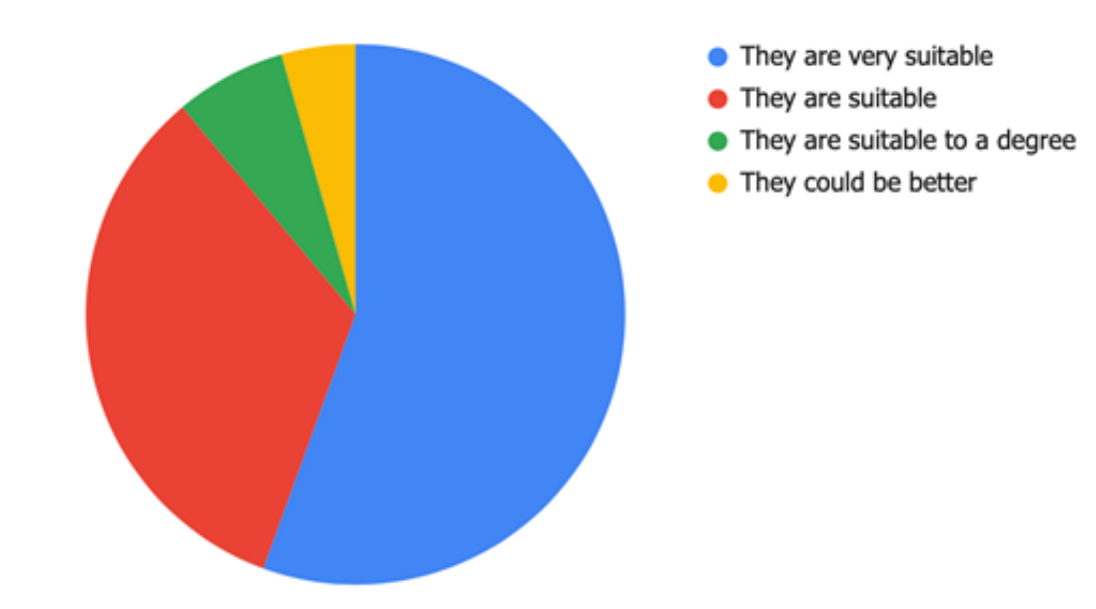


Figure 3.3: Suitability of the resources. Teachers were asked if the resources were suitable. 55.6% of the schools (25/45) stated that the resources were very suitable, 33.3% (15/45) said that the resources were suitable, 6.7% (3/45) stated that they were suitable to a certain point and 4.4% (2/45) stated that they could be better. N=45 schools.

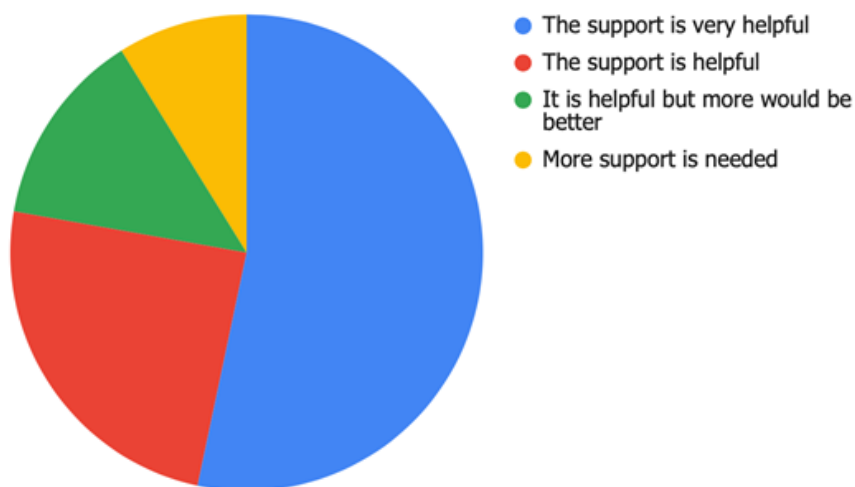


Figure 3.4: teachers' opinion regarding support. Teachers were asked if the support they get from Gael Linn is helpful. 53.3% (24/45) said the support is very helpful., 24.4% (11/45) said that the support is helpful, 13.3% (6/45) said that the support was helpful, but it could be better and 8.9% (4/45) said that additional support was needed N=45 schools.

The teachers gave examples of the support that would be useful as part of the questionnaire. There were similarities between the answers. It was requested by 6 schools that training be provided, with a further 14 schools suggesting that additional resources be provided, especially resources that help with pronunciation etc. 17 schools stated that a teacher that could come into the schools would be useful in this scheme.

### 3.6 The value of the scheme

Figure 3.5 shows that every school feels that their children are learning Irish within their school. As well as that, every school thinks that the scheme is valuable for the schools as is shown in Figure 3.6. It is difficult to describe what the word 'valuable' means but a space was given at the end of the questionnaire for the teachers and some of them highlighted the value associated with this scheme.

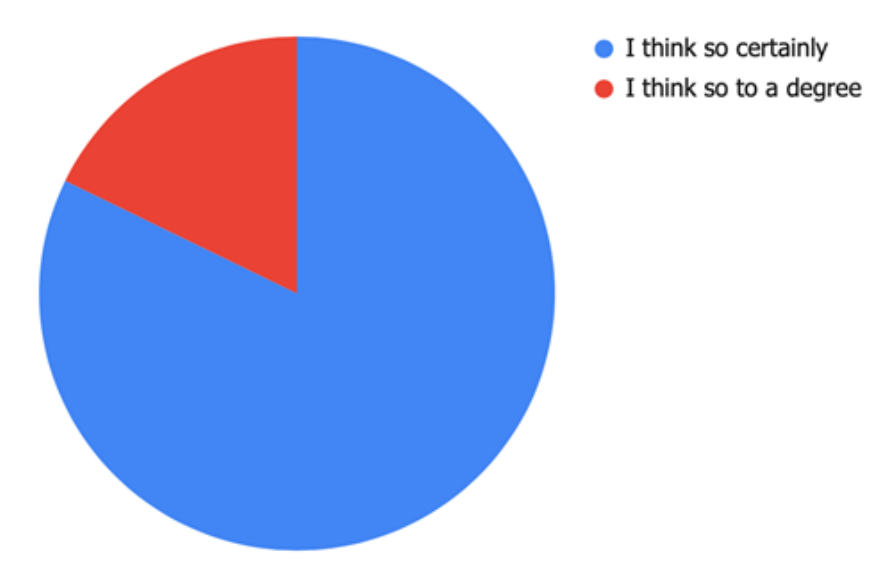


Figure 3.5: Irish language learning within the scheme. Teachers were asked do they think that the children are learning Irish. In 82.2% of the schools (37/45) they think that the students are learning Irish and 17.8% of the schools (8/45) think that the students are learning Irish to a certain point. N=45 schools.

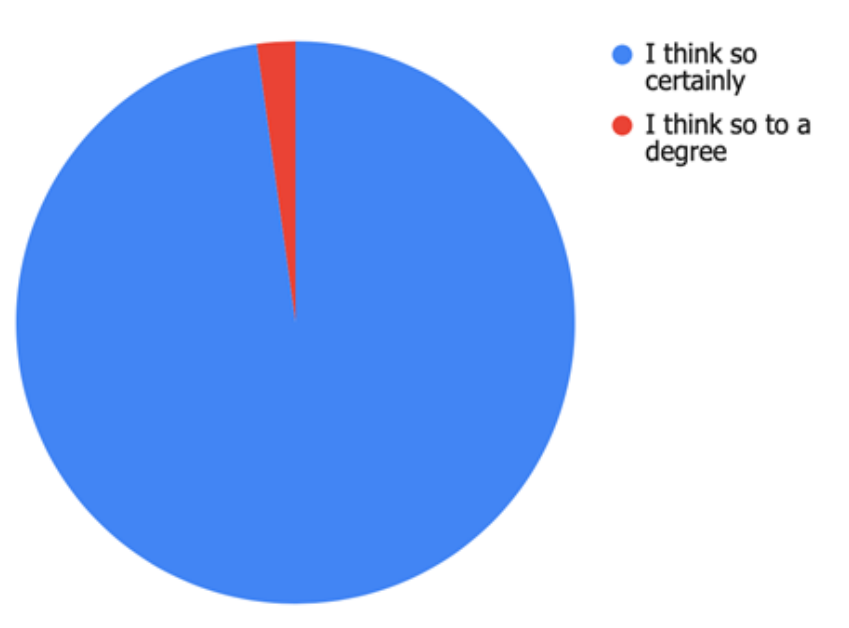


Figure 3.6: Value of the scheme. Teachers were asked do they think that this scheme is valuable for the school. In 97.8% of the schools (44/45) they said yes definitely and in 2.2% of the schools (1/45) they said yes to a certain point. N=45 schools.

Some of the teachers have given a sample of the use of Irish outside the classroom:

'The parents and the school community are talking about the scheme, and the children are coming home speaking in Irish. When you are walking around the school, the children say maidin mhaith/Dia duit/ tráthnóna maith/slán etc. It's nice to see!'

Although resources for lessons are provided as part of this scheme, Gael Linn provides resources to promote the use of Irish in the school environment and it is clear that this is effective in some of the schools. The value associated with this scheme is not limited to Irish itself nor to languages in general. As one teacher stated:

'Confidence in children; many children who would find other subjects difficult have found themselves excelling. These children greet others through Irish each morning and parents have now started doing the same. Hearing the children using Irish in the playground has shown us how valuable this scheme has been!' (Appendix 6)

This highlights the positive impact learning Irish has played on children who struggle in other subjects, and it shows that the Irish language is being used by both children and parents and that it is being used outside the classroom, which helps considerably with regards to language normalisation.

Of the 45 schools that completed the questionnaire, 93.3% stated that they would register for the scheme again as is shown in Figure 3.7. It was stated by 4.4% of the schools that they didn't know and 2.2% (one school) stated that they would not register again. The other answers completed by that school were checked following this answer and it is at odds with the other answers provided in response to the questionnaire which were positive.

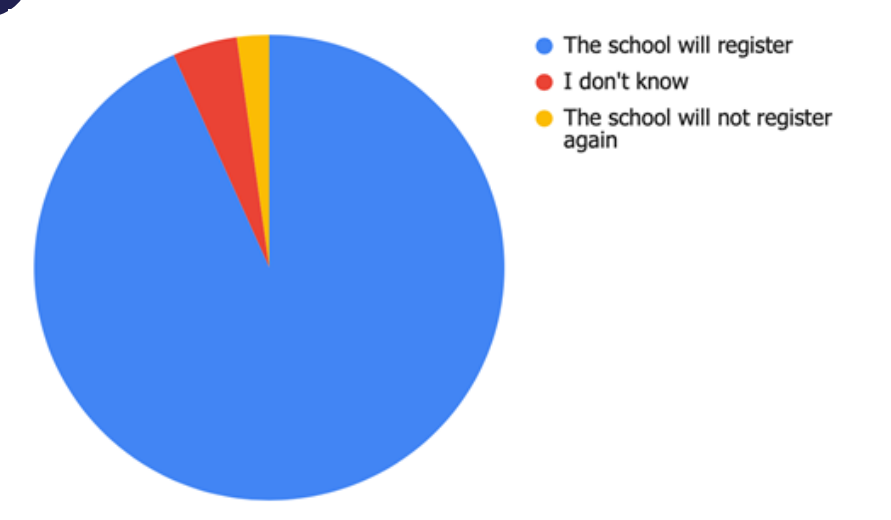


Figure 3.7: Will the school register again? Teachers were asked that if the scheme was to be provided next year would your school register again. Of the 45 schools that completed the survey, 93.3% (42/45) stated that they would register again, 4.4% (2/45) stated they do not know and 2.2% (one school) stated that they would not register again. N=45 schools.

# 4. DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Background and approach of the scheme

‘Scoil Spreagtha’ supports and gives recognition to schools that are looking to teach Irish. Schemes like this are useful to focus children’s interest on class subjects (Chen, Z., 2023) and this is born out in the results of the scheme. As well as that, the recognition given by this scheme (through Ulster University) is important for the schools as it shows that their teaching approach is effective (Alenezi et al., 2023). This scheme uses the resources that belonged to the Léargas programme and due to this, it removes a considerable amount of pressure for teachers to create class resources. As well as that, it gives a structure to the teachers who are providing classes for children, especially given the lack of a syllabus for teaching a second language.

Although there are resources for classroom exercises and lessons as part of this scheme, it is not limited to the classroom and schools were asked, as part of the scheme criteria, to promote the Irish language outside the classroom and on social media as well. This contributes to the visibility of the scheme, promotes the use of the Irish language as part of the school day and contributes to the normalisation of the language as well.

Although a considerable amount of research has been carried out on the traditional teaching of languages within the classroom, there is now a greater focus on the promotion of languages outside of the classroom in a more informal way and in a fun way (Reinders and Benson, 2017; Bavi, 2018).

‘Scoil Spreagtha’ is different from other schemes that have been in NI (Léargas and The Primary Modern Languages Project’) in that a visiting teacher does not come into the schools but is similar to the way that other languages are taught in Ireland and Scotland as the teachers themselves teach the classes (Christie et al., 2016; O’Toole, 2023). There are 82 schools registered with this scheme this year and 131 schools declared an interest to be part of it in the academic year 2024/25 (Scoil Spreagtha, 2024). As is seen in Chapter 3.1, Irish was not taught in 55/6% of the schools before they were part of this scheme, and this of course raises practical issues which will be discussed below.



## 4.2 Experience and feedback of the teachers

As is seen in Chapter 3.1, there is a responsibility on the teachers teaching Irish, to collect evidence and to upload it as part of this scheme. There is a variety of different schools taking part in this scheme with teachers involved with a good standard of Irish and other teachers with no Irish as is show in Chapter 3.4. Therefore, the different schools with have different requirements.

This survey focused on the experience of the teachers regarding the criteria of the scheme, the resources and support of the scheme and the experience of the children but an analysis was not carried out on the teaching strategies used by the teachers. Information associated with the best teaching practice for languages would be useful in developing the scheme. As well as that, the information that can be collected from a questionnaire is limited and as a result of that, it would be good to invite teachers to be involved in interviews to discuss points that were made in the questionnaire.

Although most of the teachers were satisfied with the resources that are available as is seen in Chapter 3.4, 17 teachers stated that teaching support, like that provided by the Léargas scheme (BBC, 2023b) was useful. There were 6 schools that stated that training would be useful and there are schemes in other countries (Scotland for instance) that provide training to teachers so that they can teach languages within their classes. There is currently a course as part of 'The Open University, Scotland' called 'Teachers Learning to Teach Languages' (TELT) (The Open University Scotland, 2024). An approach like this could be useful for the teachers as they would be able to learn how to use the resources they have been given in the classroom and about the way to incorporate Irish into the daily life of the school.

Most of the teachers gave positive feedback regarding the value of the scheme in their schools as is shown in Chapter 3.6 but it is challenging for the teachers to give a precise description of the children's development regarding Irish, as there are no formal examinations as part of this scheme. The feedback is not objective and is not based on information about the language ability of the students like other surveys that describe the language learning of children in Primary schools in other countries (Edelenbos and Vinjé, 2000). Information about the language ability of the students would be useful but it was not possible as part of this survey due to time constrictions and due to the fact that this is a pilot scheme with all the schools having a different approach to the scheme. As well as that, the teachers themselves are involved in teaching within the schools and as a result there is a possibility that the teachers possess an unconscious bias. It would be useful to speak directly to the school children to learn about their opinions and experience regarding learning Irish.



# 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



It is clear from this survey that the teachers feel this is a valuable scheme and that the children are learning Irish. There are 82 schools, and 14,785 children registered with this scheme. This is the only scheme in NI that supports teachers to teach Irish in the classroom and there are challenges associated with this.

Irish was not needed for teachers to be part of this scheme and there is a considerable difference between the standard of Irish that teachers in the different schools have. The teachers in the scheme had suggestions in reference to the resources, support and teaching in the scheme to further develop the scheme.

This survey is limited in several ways. It did not focus on the teaching methodology as part of the survey and interviews were not carried out with children that were learning Irish as part of the scheme. If other research was to be carried out on this scheme, information associated with these areas would greatly add to our understanding of this scheme.

## Recommendations from the survey

There are a number of recommendations based on the evidence from this survey.

1. The results of the survey show that the scheme has succeeded in introducing an accredited scheme into over 80 schools and it is recommended that the scheme continues, based on the positive feedback from the teachers.
2. Based on the feedback from the teachers and from the information they gave on the teachers' standard of Irish, it is recommended that teachers are provided to offer practical teaching support to schools, especially those schools that do not have teachers who speak Irish. Both training on teaching in Irish and on other strategies to teach and promote Irish in and out of the classroom would be useful as well.
3. Teaching another language is not part of the NI Curriculum and as a result more research will be required on the teachers experience and on the experience of the children themselves to develop this scheme and to recognise best-practice in teaching another language.

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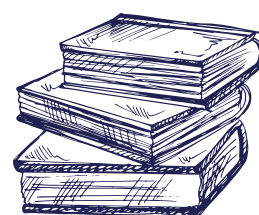
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# 7. APPENDICES

**Appendix 2:** The questionnaire made available on Google Forms for teachers to fill in

**Appendix 3:** Results of the Survey

**Figure 3.1:** Number of classes in the schools where Irish is taught. Pg 10

**Figure 3.2:** Number of teachers within the schools who have an ability in the Irish language. Pg 12.

**Figure 3.3:** Suitability of the resources. Pg 13.

**Figure 3.4:** Teachers' opinion regarding support. Pg 14.

**Figure 3.5:** Learning of Irish in the scheme. Pg 15.

**Figure 3.6:** Value of the scheme in the school. Pg 16.

**Figure 3.7:** Will the school be registered again? Pg 23.

**Appendix 4:** What Were The Reasons For the Schools Registering With This Scheme

**Table 4.1:** The reasons why schools were registered with this scheme

**Appendix 5:** What Kind of Support or Resources Do You Think Would Be Useful in This Scheme?

**Table 5.1:** What kind of support or resources would be useful in the scheme.

**Appendix 6:** Can You Give An Example of The Positive Impact The Scheme has On Your School/School Community

**Table 6.1:** A positive impact that the scheme has had on your

school/school community.

**Appendix 7:** Would you Like to Mention anything Else about The Scheme?

**Table 7.1:** Any other information relating to the project.

# 7. APPENDICES





Scoil Spreagtha



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