

An Tumoideachas: Na Buntáistí - Tacaíocht ón Taighde

An Chomhairle um Oideachas
Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta



INSTITIÚID OIDEACHAIS
MARINO

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Brollach

Ba mhaith liom fáilte agus fiche a chur roimh fhoilsiú an Leabhráin seo ar bhuntáistí an tumoideachais. Leagtar amach anseo na buntáistí a bhaineann leis an tumoideachas ar bhealach inléite sothuigthe. Tá súil agam go mbeidh príomhoidí, múinteoirí agus na cleachtóirí uile in earnáil an oideachais in ann an Leabhrán seo a úsáid mar uirlis chumarsáide chun buntáistí an tumoideachais a roinnt le tuismitheoirí.

Níl aon insint ar an méid taighde a rinneadh ar ghnéithe éagsúla den tumoideachas in Éirinn le breis is fiche bliain, céatadán suntasach de a bhí maoinithe ag COGG. Foilsítear an taighde go léir a mhaoiníonn COGG ar shuíomh na heagraíochta. É sin ráite, tá sé deacair teacht ar thátail agus ar phríomhtheachtaireachtaí an chorpais taighde sin go léir go héasca.

Ag deireadh na bliana 2023 lorgaíodh léirithe spéise ó institiúidí oideachais agus ó thaighdeoirí chun scagadh agus iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar an taighde go léir atá déanta ar an tumoideachas i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann. Ba ar an Dr Claire Dunne a bronnadh an conradh don obair seo thar ceann Institiúid Oideachais Marino. Tá torthaí an taighde iomláin sin - **An Tumoideachas ag an mBunleibhéal in Éirinn: Léargais ón Taighde Náisiúnta** - ar fáil ar shuíomh COGG don té ar mian leis/léi iniúchadh iomlán a dhéanamh ar na torthaí.

Tá tábhacht nach beag ag baint leis an anailís seo mar tá go leor fianaise ann go bhfuil buntáistí suntasacha ag baint leis an tumoideachas. Tá sé ríthábhachtach na buntáistí sin atá bunaithe ar thaighde a roinnt ar bhealach inrochtana leis na scoileanna agus leis an earnáil oideachais go ginearálta, ionas go bhféadfaí an t-eolas a chur ar thuismitheoirí agus iad ag déanamh cinntí faoi oideachas a bpáistí. Is chuige sin a forbraíodh an acmhainn seo.

Gabhaim buíochas ó chroí leis an Dr Claire Dunne as a cuid díograise agus dua leis an obair fhíorthábhachtach seo agus leo siúd go léir a chuaigh i mbun taighde le breis is fiche bliain anuas chun cur go suntasach leis an gcorpas taighde ar an tumoideachas in Éirinn.

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Buntáistí an Tumoideachais

Sa chóras tumoideachais, foghlaimíonn páistí gach ábhar tríd an sprioctheanga. In Éirinn, tá scoileanna Gaeltachta ann chomh maith le scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht. Tá oideachas lán-Ghaeilge ar fáil ag leibhéal na naíonraí, na bunscoile agus na hiar-bhunscoile. Tá roinnt cúrsaí lán-Ghaeilge ar fáil ag an tríú leibhéal freisin. Is í is aidhm le scoileanna tumoideachais in Éirinn ná ardchaighdeán oideachais a chur ar fáil, chomh maith le hardchaighdeán sa chumas cumarsáide a chothú. Tacaíonn an bunús láidir seo le páistí a bheith mar bhaill de phobal agus líonra Gaeilge, agus tacaíonn sé le nuachainteorí na Gaeilge freisin (Ó Duibhir, 2018). Tacaíonn an tumoideachas le páistí i gceantair Ghaeltachta, agus i gceantair lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht, a úsáideann an Ghaeilge mar theanga bhaile, nó a úsáideann an Ghaeilge agus teanga eile sa bhaile.

Nuair a thosaíonn páistí sa chóras tumoideachais, tosaíonn siad ar aistear teanga a bhfuil go leor buntáistí ag baint leis. Tacaíonn na buntáistí seo lena bhforbairt iomlánaíoch. Taispeánann an taighde idirnáisiúnta go mbíonn go leor buntáistí ag daoine dátheangacha agus ilteangacha, mar shampla, buntáistí acadúla, sóisialta, teangeolaíocha agus eacnamaíocha (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013).

Taispeánann an taighde ar an tumoideachas ag an mbunleibhéal in Éirinn go mbaineann páistí buntáistí amach sna réimsí forbartha seo a leanas:

Buntáistí Acadúla 	Éiríonn chomh maith nó níos fearr le páistí i scoileanna tumoideachais le hais páistí i scoileanna lán-Bhéarla (Gilleece et al., 2012; McCoy, Quail agus Smyth, 2012a; Parsons agus Lyddy, 2016). Mar an gcéanna lena bpiaraí, baineann páistí le riachtanais speisialta agus le riachtanais bhreise oideachais buntáistí amach sa chóras tumoideachais i go leor de na réimsí céanna acadúla agus forbartha: an dátheangachas, cumas sa Ghaeilge, buntáistí acadúla san iar-bhunscoil, féinmhuinín agus cultúr dearfach scoile (Nic Aindriú, 2019).
Buntáistí Teangeolaíocha 	Baineann páistí sa chóras tumoideachais ardchumas amach i gcoitinne sa Bhéarla (Foras Taighde ar Oideachas, 2024; Ó hAiniféin, 2008; Parsons agus Lyddy, 2016). Cothaíonn an córas tumoideachais inniúlacht níos airde sa Ghaeilge, ná mar a chothaítear nuair a dhéantar staidéar ar an nGaeilge mar ábhar amháin (Harris et al., 2006; Ó Duibhir, 2018). Tacaíonn an tumoideachas le dearthaí dearfacha i leith fhoghlaím na Gaeilge (Kiely et al., 2024; Kiely et al., 2022; Ó Duibhir et al., 2017).
Buntáistí Ilteangacha 	Tríd an nGaeilge a fhoghlaim, tá páistí páirteach sa phobal comhaimseartha ilteangach. Sa tumoideachas, léiríonn páistí spéis i dteangacha eile a fhoghlaim chomh maith (Dillon, 2009; Kiely et al., 2024). Sa tumoideachas, léiríonn páistí bua i bhfoghlaim an tríú teanga (Prats Porcar, 2013). I gcás tuismitheoirí a labhraíonn teangacha eile seachas an Ghaeilge nó an Béarla sa bhaile, feiceann siad na buntáistí a bhaineann leis an tumoideachas chun cur le cumas ilteangach a bpáistí (Ní Dhiorbháin, Connaughton-Crean agus Ó Duibhir, 2023).
Buntáistí Sóisialta 	I scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge, léiríonn páistí roinnt buntáistí sóisialta maidir le cairdeas a dhéanamh agus a bhuanú (McCoy, Quail agus Smyth, 2012a).
Buntáistí Cultúrtha agus Idirchultúrtha 	Sa tumoideachas, faigheann páistí níos mó deiseanna a bheith ag plé leis na healaíona agus le himeachtaí cultúrtha (Kiely et al., 2024; Kiely et al., 2022; McCoy, Quail agus Smyth, 2012b). I scoileanna tumoideachais, léann páistí níos minice mar chaitheamh aimsire (McCoy, Quail agus Smyth, 2012a). Sa tumoideachas, faigheann páistí tuiscint níos doimhne ar an gcultúr Gaelach agus tugtar deis dóibh baint a bheith acu le snáithe uathúil agus saibhir d'oidhreacht chultúrtha shochaí na hÉireann (CNCM, 2019). Léiríonn siad feasacht ar imeachtaí staire agus ar an mbéaloides, chomh maith le siombailí a bhaineann le féiniúlacht Eorpach (Lennon Malbasha, Dautel agus Taylor, 2022). Léiríonn siad spéis freisin san fheasacht idirchultúrtha (Kiely et al., 2024).
Buntáistí Cognaíocha 	Sa tumoideachas, léiríonn páistí roinnt buntáistí cognaíocha, go háirithe maidir le tascanna casta feidhm feidhmiúcháin, rud a chiallaíonn go bhfuil siad in ann rudaí a shórtáil agus a rangú (Stephens, 2013). Léiríonn siad buntáistí meititheangeolaíocha freisin, rud a chiallaíonn go bhfuil siad in ann smaoineamh ar ghnéithe éagsúla den teanga agus iad a phlé, mar shampla, gramadach agus comhréir (Dillon, 2009; Harris agus O'Leary, 2012; Kiely et al., 2024; Prats Porcar, 2013).

An Tumoideachas agus Forbairt Iomlánaíoch an Pháiste

Tacaíonn an córas tumoideachais ag an mbunleibhéal, idir scoileanna Gaeltachta agus scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht, le forbairt iomlánaíoch an pháiste. Cuireann an tumoideachas le roinnt buntáistí eile, ina measc, buntáistí acadúla, buntáistí teangeolaíocha, buntáistí ilteangacha, buntáistí sóisialta, buntáistí cultúrtha agus idirchultúrtha, agus buntáistí cognaíocha. Ach baineann go leor de na buntáistí a phléitear sa lámhleabhar seo le páistí atá ag freastal ar iar-bhunscoileanna lán-Ghaeilge freisin. Tá sé ar intinn ag COGG foilseachán eile don earráil iar-bhunscolaíochta a chur ar fáil.

Buntáistí Acadúla

Ar an iomlán, éiríonn chomh maith nó níos fearr le páistí i scoileanna tumoideachais le hais páistí i scoileanna lán-Bhéarla (Gilleece et al., 2012; McCoy, Quail agus Smyth, 2012a; Ó hAiniféin, 2008; Parsons agus Lyddy, 2016), agus bíonn ardchaighdeán oideachais i gcoitinne sna scoileanna (ETI Northern Ireland, 2018).

Tá éagsúlacht de bhuanna, riachtanais, spéiseanna agus pearsantachtaí i measc na bpáistí a fhreastalaíonn ar an gcóras tumoideachais (Dunne agus Ní Aogáin, 2025; Nic Aindriú, 2019) agus ní hionann aon bheirt fhoghlaiméoirí (Ní Chlochasaigh, 2020). Bíonn roinnt de na tacaíochtaí céanna ag teastáil uathu is a bhíonn ó pháistí i scoileanna lán-Bhéarla, chomh maith le roinnt tacaíochtaí a bhaineann leis an teanga ó bhéal agus an litearthacht sa Ghaeilge. Mar an gcéanna lena bpiaraí, baineann páistí le riachtanais speisialta agus riachtanais bhreise oideachais buntáistí amach sa chóras tumoideachais i go leor de na réimsí céanna acadúla agus forbartha: an dátheangachas, cumas sa Ghaeilge, buntáistí acadúla san iar-bhunscoil, féinmhuinín agus cultúr dearfach scoile (Nic Aindriú, 2019).

Buntáistí Teangeolaíocha

Tugann an tumoideachas deis do pháistí litearthacht a fhorbairt in dhá theanga fhoirmiúla na scoile: an Ghaeilge agus an Béarla. Tacaíonn an fhorbairt i dteanga amháin le forbairt sa teanga eile (August agus Shanahan, 2006; Baker agus Wright, 2017; Ó Duibhir agus Cummins, 2012). Tá sé tugtha faoi deara sa chóras tumoideachais go sealbhaítear an dara teanga / teanga bhreise gan dochar a dhéanamh do shealbhú na máthairtheanga (Harris et al., 2006; Shiel et al., 2011).

Baineann páistí sa chóras tumoideachais ardchumas i gcoitinne amach sa mhórtheanga (McVeigh, Wylie agus Mulhern, 2019; Ó hAiniféin, 2008; Parsons agus Lyddy, 2016). Mar a léirítear i gcás na Breatnaise, an teagmháil a bhíonn ag páistí lasmuigh den scoil leis an mBéarla, cabhraíonn sé le teacht timpeall ar aon bhearna a bhaineann le múineadh foirmiúil na mórtheanga sna luathbhlianta den chóras tumoideachais (Rhys agus Thomas, 2013).

D'éirigh go han-mhaith le páistí i bPoblacht na hÉireann agus i dTuaisceart Éireann maidir le léitheoireacht an Bhéarla sa staidéar is déanaí *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS), agus bhí feabhas suntasach tagtha ar ghnóthachtáil páistí i scoileanna i bPoblacht na hÉireann (ba chóir a chur san áireamh, áfach, go raibh na páistí a ghlac páirt sa staidéar beagán níos sine ná mar is gnáth mar gheall ar an moill a bhain le COVID-19) (Delaney et al., 2023). Bhí páistí i scoileanna tumoideachais san áireamh sa staidéar. San anailís bhreise atá curtha ar fáil ag an bhForas Taighde ar Oideachas¹, taispeántar, ar an meán, gur éirigh chomh maith le páistí sa chóras tumoideachais le hais páistí i scoileanna lán-Bhéarla, agus gur éirigh go han-mhaith leo i gcomparáid lena bpiaraí idirnáisiúnta.

Baineann páistí sa chóras tumoideachais inniúlacht níos airde amach sa Ghaeilge, ná mar a bhaineann páistí a dhéanann staidéar ar an nGaeilge mar ábhar amháin (Harris et al., 2006; Ó Duibhir, 2018). Léiríonn siad dearcadh dearfach i gcoitinne maidir leis an nGaeilge a fhoghlaim (Kiely et al., 2024; Kiely et al., 2022; Ó Duibhir et al., 2017). Tá contanam dátheangachais / ilteangachais ann agus baineann daoine úsáid as a stór teangacha i mbealaí éagsúla agus i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla. Tá forbairt ar na teicneolaíochtaí cruthaitheacha atá ar fáil sa Ghaeilge. Na teicneolaíochtaí don Chumarsáid Mhalartach agus Bhreisitheach atá á bhforbairt i gColáiste na Tríonóide, cuirfidh siad ar chumas daoine cumarsáid a dhéanamh trí shraith focal nó íomhánna a roghnú, agus beidh cainteoirí Gaeilge in ann cumarsáid a dhéanamh i mbealaí níos solúbtha (Barnes et al., 2022).



Buntáistí Ilteangacha

Cuireann scoileanna Gaeltachta agus scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht leis an éagsúlacht teangacha atá ar fáil in Éirinn, trí spás a chruthú do pháistí teagmháil rialta a bheith acu leis an nGaeilge. Úsáidtear os cionn 200 teanga in Éirinn sa lá atá inniu, ina measc, na trí theanga mhionlaithe dhúchasacha: an Ghaeilge, Teanga Chomharthaíochta na hÉireann agus Caintis. Tugann an tumoideachas deis do pháistí an Ghaeilge a shealbhú agus a shaibhriú, chomh maith le tuiscint a fhorbairt orthu féin mar chainteoirí ilteangacha.

Sa chóras tumoideachais, léiríonn páistí bua i bhfoghlaim an tríú teanga (Prats Porcar, 2013). I gcás tuismitheoirí a labhraíonn teangacha eile seachas an Ghaeilge nó an Béarla sa bhaile, feiceann siad na buntáistí a bhaineann leis an tumoideachas chun cur le cumas ilteangach a bpáistí (Ní Dhiorbháin, Connaughton-Crean agus Ó Duibhir, 2023).

Buntáistí Sóisialta

Bíonn roinnt buntáistí sóisialta ag páistí sa chóras tumoideachais. Taispeántar i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht go mbíonn na páistí ag coinneáil i dteagmháil lena gcairde, trí bhualadh leo aghaidh ar aghaidh agus ag coinneáil i dteagmháil leo ar na meáin shóisialta. Uaireanta bíonn páistí ó cheantair éagsúla ag taisteal chuig scoil lán-Ghaeilge agus spreagtar iad le hiarracht a dhéanamh a bheith i dteagmháil lena gcairde lasmuigh den scoil (McCoy, Quail, agus Smyth, 2012a).

Buntáistí Cultúrtha agus Idirchultúrtha

Bíonn níos mó ná buntáistí teanga ag baint leis an gcóras tumoideachais agus bíonn tionchar ag an gcineál seo oideachais ar réimsí eile d'fhorbairt an pháiste. I scoileanna Gaeltachta agus lán-Ghaeilge bíonn páistí ag léamh mar chaitheamh aimsire níos minice (McCoy, Quail agus Smyth, 2012a). Cabhraíonn an léitheoireacht mar chaitheamh aimsire le dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge (Devitt et al., 2018).

I scoileanna tumoideachais, faigheann páistí níos mó taithí ar an Drámaíocht, Ceol, agus Corpoideachas a dhéanamh (McCoy, Quail agus Smyth, 2012b). Tacaíonn na gnéithe cultúrtha ach go háirithe le gnóthachtáil acadúil na bpáistí (McCoy, Quail, agus Smyth, 2012a) agus luann páistí go dtaitníonn na hábhair seo go mór leo (Kiely et al., 2024).

Sa tumoideachas, faigheann páistí tuiscint níos doimhne ar an gcultúr Gaelach agus tugtar deis dóibh baint a bheith acu le snáithe uathúil agus saibhir d'oidhreacht chultúrtha shochaí na hÉireann (CNCM, 2019). Léiríonn siad feasacht ar imeachtaí staire agus ar an mbéaloideas, chomh maith le siombailí a bhaineann le féiniúlacht Eorpach (Lennon Malbasha, Dautel agus Taylor, 2022). Léiríonn siad spéis freisin i bhforbairt na feasachta idirchultúrtha (Kiely et al., 2024).

Buntáistí Cognaíocha

I dtaighde ar thionchar an dátheangachais scoilbhunaithe in Éirinn, léiríonn sé nach mbíonn aon tionchar diúltach aige ar an bhfeidhm feidhmiúcháin, is é sin an cumas nithe a rangú, a shórtáil agus a thabhairt chun cuimhne (Kennedy, 2012). Bíonn buntáistí ag páistí i réimsí áirithe, mar shampla, agus iad ag plé le tascanna casta feidhm feidhmiúcháin (Stephens, 2013), mar a thagann chun cinn sa taighde idirnáisiúnta (Bialystok, 2009).

Léiríonn siad buntáistí meititheangeolaíocha freisin, rud a chiallaíonn go bhfuil siad in ann smaoineamh ar ghnéithe éagsúla den teanga agus iad a phlé, mar shampla, gramadach agus comhréir (Dillon, 2009; Harris agus O'Leary, 2012; Kiely et al., 2024; Prats Porcar, 2013).

Clabhsúr

Tacaíonn an córas tumoideachais le forbairt iomlánaíoch an pháiste. Thar an iomlán, éiríonn chomh maith nó níos fearr le páistí sa chóras tumoideachais, i gcomparáid le páistí i scoileanna lán-Bhéarla, agus baineann siad go leor buntáistí amach i réimsí éagsúla. Bíonn buanna, spéiseanna, agus riachtanais éagsúla ag gach páiste a fhreastalaíonn ar an gcóras tumoideachais. Is féidir leis an tumoideachas tacú le haistear oideachais gach páiste, chomh fada agus atá oideolaíocht ionchuimsitheach agus pleanáil uile-scoile ann, chomh maith le háiseanna cuí.



Fás agus Forbairt an Tumoideachais

Téann an t-oideachas dátheangach siar go dtí aimsir na Rómhánach agus na nGréagach, agus sa lá atá inniu ann tá cláir thumoideachais agus cláir dhátheangacha ar fáil i dtromlach mór de thíortha an domhain (Hornberger, 2008; Ó Brolcháin, 2015). Ní haon eisceacht í Éire agus tá stair shaibhir shuimiúil ó thaobh an tumoideachais de le fáil inti. Tá luach ag baint leis an gcóras tumoideachais, ní hamháin ó thaobh athneartú teanga de, ach ó thaobh leathnú an tsoláthair oideachais, agus rannpháirtíocht tuismitheoirí de. Tháinig fás agus forbairt ar an oideachas lán-Ghaeilge thar na blianta. Tá cur síos thíos ar roinnt de na forbairtí móra.

1908 – Bhunaigh Pádraig Mac Piarais Scoil Éanna inar múineadh ábhair go dátheangach.

1917 – Chomhbhunaigh Luíse Ghabhánach Ní Dhufaigh agus Áine Nic Aodha an chéad scoil lán-Ghaeilge.

1922 – Tháinig an tumoideachas i bhfeidhm sna ranganna naíonán sa Saorstát.

1952 – Bunaíodh Scoil Lorcáin i mBaile Átha Cliath, an chéad bhunscoil lán-Ghaeilge i bPoblacht na hÉireann. Ina dhiaidh sin, tháinig bunscoileanna lán-Ghaeilge eile ar an bhfód, ina measc Scoil Neasáin (1969), Scoil an tSeachtar Laoch (1973) agus Scoil Naithí (1973).

1960í – Chruinnigh cainteoirí dúchais le chéile chun Gaeltacht uirbeach ar Bhóthar Seoighe a bhunú in Iarthar Bhéal Feirste.

1969 – Bunaíodh Coláiste Eoin, agus Coláiste Íosagáin ina dhiaidh sin (1971), chun rogha na hiar-bhunscolaíochta lán-Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil.

1970í – Tháinig tuismitheoirí, teaghlaigh agus oideachasóirí le chéile chun níos mó scoileanna tumoideachais a bhunú.

1971 – Bunaíodh Bunscoil Phobal Feirste, an chéad scoil lán-Ghaeilge i dTuaisceart Éireann.

1972 – Bunaíodh Comhdháil na Scoileanna Gaelacha, Gaillimh.

1973 – Bunaíodh Comhchoiste Náisiúnta na Scoileanna Gaeilge, Baile Átha Cliath.

1974-1976 – Chomhdhlúthaigh an dá eagraíocht thuas chun tacú leis an gcóras tumoideachais a bhí ag teacht ar an bhfód, agus glacadh leis an ainm Gaelscoileanna mar theideal na heagraíochta. Tugtar Gaeloideachas ar an eagraíocht anois.

1981 – Bunaíodh Coláiste Chilliaín i gCluain Dolcáin, an chéad iar-bhunscoil lán-Ghaeilge faoi stiúir na gCoistí Gairmoideachais lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht.

1983 – Bunaíodh an chéad aonad lán-Ghaeilge i dTuaisceart Éireann i gcathair Dhoire.

1987 – Bunaíodh Eagraíocht na Scoileanna Gaeltachta.

1991 – Bunaíodh an chéad iar-bhunscoil, Coláiste Feirste (Meánscoil Feirste) i dTuaisceart Éireann. Tháinig Gaeloiliúint, an chéad scátheagraíocht do scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge i dTuaisceart Éireann, ar an bhfód.

1990í – Tá níos mó tacaíochtaí ar fáil don chóras tumoideachais i dTuaisceart Éireann mar gheall ar Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta (1998), The Education Order (1998) agus bunú Chomhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (2000), chomh maith le hlontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta (2001).

1993 – Bunaíodh An Foras Pátrúnachta le go mbeadh rogha eile ar fáil do scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge nua a bhí ag teacht ar an bhfód ó thaobh pátrúnachta de. Is é An Foras Pátrúnachta an pátrún is mó ar scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge sa lá atá inniu ann.

1993 – Bunaíodh Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Álainn i gCorcaigh, an chéad scoil lán-Ghaeilge ilchreidmheach.

1995 – Cuireadh tús le Teastas Iarchéime lán-Ghaeilge san Oideachas i gColáiste Ollscoile Naomh Muire, Béal Feirste. An bhliain dár gcionn, thosaigh an chéad chohórt de mhic léinn BEd ar an gcéim trí mheán na Gaeilge.

1996 – Bunaíodh Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin i gContae Chill Mhantáin, an chéad scoil lán-Ghaeilge idirchreidmheach.

1998 – Cuireadh tús leis an ArdTeastas san Oideachas, cáilíocht don iar-bhunscolaíocht, in Ollscoil na Gaillimhe. Tugtar an Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas air ón mbliain 2014 ar aghaidh.

2002 – Bunaíodh An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG).

2011 – Cuireadh Máistreacht san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge ar bun i gColáiste Ollscoile Naomh Muire.

2013 – Cuireadh tús le Máistreacht san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta i gColáiste Mhuire gan Smál, Luimneach. Ó 2023 ar aghaidh, tá an Mháistreacht á soláthar ag Coláiste na Tríonóide.

2016 – Foilsíodh an Polasaí don Oideachas Gaeltachta agus bunaíodh an tAonad um Oideachas Gaeltachta sa Roinn Oideachais.

2019 – Thosaigh an chéad chohórt ar an mBaitsiléir san Oideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge in Institiúid Oideachais Marino.

2024 – Foilsíodh an comhairliúchán náisiúnta ar an oideachas lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht. Tá polasaí nua don oideachas lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht á fhorbairt ag an Roinn Oideachais.

Ag Tacú le do Pháiste sa Chóras Tumoideachais

Is ag croílár fhís an tumoideachais in Éirinn atá rannpháirtíocht tuismitheoirí, an teaghlaigh agus daoine tábhachtacha eile i saol an pháiste. Is iad na tuismitheoirí, na teaghlaigh agus na hoideachasóirí a oibríonn as lámha a chéile chun scoileanna Gaeltachta agus scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge a bhunú agus a bhuanú. Bíonn leibhéal éagsúla muiníne i measc tuismitheoirí agus teaghlach maidir le Gaeilge a úsáid. Ach má tá dearcadh dearfach ann i leith na teanga, agus má tá spéis sa Ghaeilge, is féidir leis sin difríocht mhór a dhéanamh (Harris et al., 2006). Ní hionann gach tuismitheoir ná gach teaghlach, ach tugann gach duine go leor taithí agus buanna leo. Is féidir tarraingt ar an taithí agus na buanna seo chun tacú le haistear oideachais an pháiste ar iliomad bealaí.

- Tacaigh le forbairt scileanna litearthachta do pháiste i do mháthairtheanga. Bain sult as scéalta a léamh le chéile sa bhaile.
- Má tá tú i do chónaí sa Ghaeltacht, is féidir leat eolas a fháil faoi na himeachtaí a eagraíonn Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta, chomh maith le háiseanna do thuismitheoirí agus do theaghlaigh, ar an suíomh www.tuismitheoiri.ie.
- Tabhair moladh d'iarrachtaí do pháiste le Gaeilge a labhairt agus a úsáid.
- Iarr ar do pháiste rud a d'fhoghlaim siad i nGaeilge a mhúineadh duit, mar shampla, dán nó amhrán.
- Téigh i dtaithí ar na réimsí curaclaim a bheidh á ndéanamh ag do pháiste chun tacú le hobair bhaile. Tá eolas agus tacaíocht ar fáil ar an suíomh www.gaeloideachas.ie, faoin rannóg Tuismitheoirí.
- Téigh i dtaithí ar na háiseanna foghlama do pháistí atá ar fáil ar www.cogg.ie, faoin rannóg An Tairseach.
- Bain úsáid as na háiseanna atá ar fáil ar an suíomh www.ncca.ie, faoin rannóg Gaeilge sa Bhaile, chun an méid Gaeilge atá agat a úsáid go spráúil le do pháiste.
- Faigh amach níos mó faoi na tacaíochtaí do thuismitheoirí agus do theaghlaigh, ar mian leo cur leis an méid Gaeilge a úsáideann siad sa bhaile, atá ar fáil ag www.glornangael.ie/teangati/comhairle/.
- Glac páirt in imeachtaí dátheangacha / ilteangacha na scoile.
- Faigh amach an bhfuil imeachtaí Gaeilge / ilteangacha ar siúl sa cheantar, mar shampla, Féile Mother Tongues.



Conclúid

Tá stair shaibhir shuimiúil ag an tumoideachas in Éirinn agus tá éileamh ar na scoileanna tumoideachais i gcónaí. Tá taithí phearsanta ag roinnt tuismitheoirí ar an gcóras tumoideachais iad féin. Bíonn deis ag páistí tabhairt faoi réimsí iomlána an churaclaim, mar aon leis an nGaeilge a shealbhú agus a shaibhriú ag an am céanna. Tacaíonn scoileanna tumoideachais le forbairt cumas teanga agus litearthachta sa Bhéarla, agus sa Ghaeilge ach go háirithe. Thar an iomlán, éiríonn chomh maith nó níos fearr le páistí sa chóras tumoideachais is a éiríonn le páistí i scoileanna lán-Bhéarla ó thaobh an Bhéarla de. Chomh maith leis sin, sealbhaíonn páistí an Ghaeilge agus léiríonn siad dearchtaí dearfacha i leith na teanga.

Cuireann scoileanna Gaeltachta agus scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht leis an éagsúlacht teangacha atá ar fáil in Éirinn trí spás a chruthú do pháistí teagmháil rialta a bheith acu leis an nGaeilge. Cabhraíonn an taithí seo le páistí a bheith mar chuid den phobal dátheangach / ilteangach comhaimseartha idirnáisiúnta. Aithnítear sa taighde, agus i gCuraclam Teanga na Bunscoile (2019), go bhfuil contanam dátheangachais / ilteangachais ann agus go mbaineann daoine úsáid as a stór teangacha i mbealaí éagsúla agus i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla.

Chun an tairbhe is mó a bhaint as an gcóras tumoideachais, is gá naisc láidre a chothú idir an scoil, an baile, agus an pobal, chomh maith le bheith ag obair as lámha a chéile agus cur chuige uile-scoile a chur chun cinn. Ag gach staid den aistear oideachais tá tacaíochtaí teanga agus eile de dhíth sa seomra ranga, agus lasmuigh de, le gur féidir le páistí barr a gcumais a bhaint amach.

Ach an oiread le páistí i ngach scoil, tá éagsúlacht de bhuanna, riachtanais, spéiseanna agus pearsantachtaí i measc páistí sa chóras lán-Ghaeilge. Bíonn roinnt de na tacaíochtaí céanna ag teastáil ó pháistí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge is a bhíonn ó pháistí i scoileanna lán-Bhéarla, ach tá saintacaíochtaí de dhíth, go háirithe ó thaobh na Gaeilge de. Is féidir le gach páiste tairbhe a bhaint as an gcóras tumoideachais, chomh fada agus atá oideolaíocht ionchuimsitheach agus pleanáil uile-scoile ann, chomh maith le háiseanna cuí.

Is féidir teacht ar an tuarascáil taighde iomlán, *An Tumoideachas ag an mBunleibhéal in Éirinn: Léargais ón Taighde Náisiúnta / Immersion Education at Primary Level in Ireland: Insights from National Research*, ag www.cogg.ie. Pléitear sa tuarascáil na staidéir ar fad atá mar bhunús leis an lámhleabhar seo. Táthar ag súil leis go mbeidh an tuarascáil ina cabhair d'aon duine atá ag tabhairt faoi thaighde ar an oideachas lán-Ghaeilge amach anseo.

Don am atá romhainn, is féidir linn foghlaim ón taithí a bhaineann leis an gcóras tumoideachais i suíomhanna agus i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla, agus tacaíochtaí inbhuanaithe a chur ar fáil chun go mbeidh an rogha ag tuismitheoirí agus teaghlaigh a bheith páirteach sa chóras tumoideachais i gcónaí. Faoi láthair, tá polasaí nua don oideachas lán-Ghaeilge lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht á fhorbairt ag an Roinn Oideachais, i ndiaidh fhoilsiú An Polasaí don Oideachas Gaeltachta (DES, 2016).

Ba mhaith le COGG agus le hInstitiúid Oideachais Marino a mbuíochas a chur in iúl do Claire M. Dunne as an lámhleabhar seo a ullmhú, mar aon leis an tuarascáil taighde iomlán.



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Irish-Medium Education: The Benefits - Supported by Research

An Chomhairle um Oideachas
Gaeltacha & Gaelscolaíochta



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Preface

I warmly welcome the publication of this Guide on the many advantages of immersion education. The advantages associated with immersion education are set out here in an easily accessible way. I hope that principals, teachers and all education practitioners will use this Guide as a means to communicate those advantages of immersion education to parents.

It is difficult to summarise the research that has been carried out on various aspects of immersion education in Irish in over twenty years, a significant percentage funded by COGG and this research can be found on the organisation's website. Because it is such a significant body of research it is difficult to easily access the findings and key messages.

Towards the end of 2023 expressions of interest were sought from educational institutions and researchers to undertake a comprehensive critical examination and scrutiny of all of the research on immersion education carried out in Ireland. Dr. Claire Dunne on behalf of Marino Institute of Education was the successful recipient of the contract. Her final and complete analysis - **Immersion Education at Primary Level in Ireland: Insights from National Research** - is available on COGG's website for those who may wish to examine the research in greater depth.

The analysis of the research is extremely important in that it highlights that there are significant advantages associated with immersion education. It is essential that those research-based advantages are shared in an accessible way with schools and with the education sector in general, so that they can highlight them for parents making choices in relation to their children's education. This resource was developed for that purpose.

My heartfelt thanks to Dr. Claire Dunne for her hard work and dedication to this important work and to all of those who engaged in research for over twenty years to significantly increase the corpus of research on immersion education in Ireland.

Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa

CEO: An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta

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Advantages of Immersion Education

In immersion education, children study all subject areas through the target language. In Ireland, there are Gaeltacht schools and Irish-medium schools outside of the Gaeltacht. Irish-medium education is available in early years' settings, in primary schools, and in post-primary schools. There are some Irish-medium courses available at third level too. The aim of Irish-medium education is to provide a high standard of education, as well as fostering a high standard of communication skills. This strong foundation helps children to become members of Irish-language communities and networks, and supports new speakers of Irish (Ó Duibhir, 2018). Irish-medium education supports children in Gaeltacht areas, and areas outside of the Gaeltacht, whose home language is Irish, or who use Irish and another language in the home.

When children start in Irish-medium education (or immersion education), they begin a language journey bringing with it a number of benefits, that support their holistic development. International research shows that bilingual and plurilingual people have a range of advantages, for example, academic, social, linguistic and economic advantages (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013).

Research into immersion education at primary level in Ireland, shows that children gain advantages in the following areas of development:

Academic Advantages 	Children in Irish-medium schools perform as well or better than children in English-medium schools (Gilleece et al., 2012; McCoy, Quail and Smyth, 2012a; Parsons and Lyddy, 2016). As with their peers, children with special and additional needs who attend Irish-medium education gain advantages in many of the same academic and developmental areas: bilingualism, ability in Irish, academic advantages in post-primary school, self-confidence and a positive school culture (Nic Aindriú, 2019).
Linguistic Advantages 	Children in immersion education generally achieve high proficiency in English (Educational Research Centre, 2024; Ó hAiniféin, 2008; Parsons and Lyddy, 2016). Irish-medium education helps children achieve a higher proficiency in Irish, than when Irish is studied as a subject only (Harris et al., 2006; Ó Duibhir, 2018). Immersion education helps children to develop positive attitudes towards learning Irish (Kiely et al., 2024; Kiely et al., 2022; Ó Duibhir et al., 2017).
Plurilingual Advantages 	In learning Irish, children become part of the contemporary plurilingual community. Children in immersion education also show an interest in learning other languages (Dillon, 2009; Kiely et al., 2024). Children in immersion education show an advantage in learning a third language (Prats Porcar, 2013). Parents of children who speak languages other than Irish or English at home see the benefits of immersion education in contributing to an increase in their children's plurilingual ability (Ní Dhiorbháin, Connaughton-Crean and Ó Duibhir, 2023).
Social Advantages 	Children in Irish-medium schools show some social advantages in terms of making and maintaining friendships (McCoy, Quail and Smyth, 2012a).
Cultural and Intercultural Advantages 	Children in immersion education have increased opportunities to experience the arts and cultural events (Kiely et al., 2022; Kiely et al., 2024; McCoy, Quail and Smyth, 2012b). Children in Irish-medium schools read for pleasure more frequently (McCoy, Quail and Smyth, 2012a). Children in immersion education deepen their understanding of Irish culture, allowing them to share in a unique and rich strand of the cultural heritage of Irish society (CNCM, 2019). They demonstrate an awareness of historical events and folklore, as well as symbols of European identity (Lennon Malbasha, Dautel and Taylor, 2022), and also show an interest in developing intercultural awareness (Kiely et al., 2024).
Cognitive Advantages 	Children in immersion education show some cognitive advantages, especially in engaging in complex executive function tasks e.g. sorting and classifying items (Stephens, 2013). They also show advantages in metalinguistic skills, namely, being able to think about and discuss different aspects of language, e.g. grammar and syntax (Dillon, 2009; Harris and O'Leary, 2012; Kiely et al., 2024; Prats Porcar, 2013).

Irish-Medium Education and the Child's Holistic Development

Immersion education at primary level, in Gaeltacht schools and Irish-medium schools outside of the Gaeltacht, supports children's development, contributing to many academic, linguistic, plurilingual, social, cultural, intercultural, and cognitive advantages. However many of the advantages outlined in this handbook also apply to children attending Irish-medium post-primary schools. COGG hopes to make a separate publication available for the post-primary sector.

Academic Advantages

Overall, children in Irish-medium schools do as well or better than children in English-medium schools (Gilleece et al., 2012; McCoy, Quail and Smyth, 2012a; Ó hAiniféin, 2008; Parsons and Lyddy, 2016), and there is generally a high standard of education in Irish-medium schools (ETI Northern Ireland, 2018).

Children in immersion education bring with them a variety of talents, needs, interests and personalities (Dunne and Ní Aogáin, 2025; Nic Aindriú, 2019) and no two learners are alike (Ní Chlochasaigh, 2020). They require some of the same supports as children in English-medium schools, as well as some specific supports for language and literacy in Irish. As with their peers, children with special and additional needs who attend Irish-medium education gain advantages in many of the same academic and developmental areas: bilingualism, ability in Irish, academic advantages in post-primary school, self-confidence and a positive school culture (Nic Aindriú, 2019).

Linguistic Advantages

Immersion education gives children the opportunity to develop literacy in the two formal languages of the school: Irish and English. Linguistic development in one language supports development in other languages (August and Shanahan, 2006; Baker and Wright, 2017; Ó Duibhir and Cummins, 2012). It has been observed that the second language / additional language is acquired through immersion education without adversely affecting first language acquisition (Harris et al., 2006; Shiel et al., 2011).

Children in immersion education generally achieve proficiency in the majority language (McVeigh, Wylie and Mulhern, 2019; Ó hAiniféin, 2008; Parsons and Lyddy, 2016). As is clear in the case of Welsh, the contact that children have with English outside of school helps to overcome any gap related to the formal teaching of the majority language in the early years of immersion education (Rhys and Thomas, 2013).

Children in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland performed very well overall in English reading in the most recent *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS), with a significant increase in average achievement in the Republic of Ireland (although it should be noted that participating children were slightly older than usual, due to delays caused by COVID-19) (Delaney et al., 2023). Children in Irish-medium schools were included in these samples. In the Republic of Ireland, an additional analysis supplied by the Educational Research Centre¹ indicates that children in Irish-medium schools performed at least as well as peers in English-medium schools, on average. This means that children in Irish-medium schools performed very strongly relative to peers internationally.

Children who attend Irish-medium schools achieve a higher level of proficiency in Irish compared to children who study Irish as a subject only (Harris et al., 2006; Ó Duibhir, 2018). They generally demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning Irish too (Kiely et al., 2024; Kiely et al., 2022; Ó Duibhir et al., 2017). There is a continuum of bilingualism / plurilingualism, and people can use their language repertoire in different ways and in different contexts. More creative technologies are now available in Irish. Alternative and Augmentative Communication technologies that are being developed in Trinity College Dublin, will enable children to communicate through choosing a series of words or images, allowing Irish speakers to communicate in more flexible ways (Barnes et al., 2022).



¹ Personal communication with the Educational Research Centre, 18 July 2024.

Plurilingual Advantages

Gaeltacht schools and Irish-medium schools outside of the Gaeltacht, contribute to linguistic diversity in Ireland by creating a space in which children can have regular contact with Irish. Over 200 languages are currently used in Ireland, including three indigenous minoritised languages: Irish, Irish Sign Language and Traveller Cant. Immersion education gives children the opportunity to acquire the Irish language and to enrich their language proficiency, as well as to develop an appreciation of themselves as plurilingual speakers.

Children in Irish-medium schools show an advantage in learning a third language (Prats Porcar, 2013). Parents of children who speak languages other than Irish or English at home see the benefits of immersion education in contributing to an increase in their children's plurilingual ability (Ní Dhiorbháin, Connaughton-Crean and Ó Duibhir, 2023).

Social Advantages

Children in Irish-medium schools outside of the Gaeltacht show a number of social advantages. Research shows they keep in touch with their friends by meeting them face to face or connecting with them on social media. Sometimes children from different areas travel to Irish-medium schools and this helps encourage them to keep in touch with their friends outside of school (McCoy, Quail, and Smyth, 2012a).



Cultural and Intercultural Advantages

Immersion education not only supports linguistic advantages, but it has a positive effect on other areas of children's development. Children in Irish-medium schools read for pleasure more frequently (McCoy, Quail and Smyth, 2012a). Reading for pleasure helps foster a positive attitude towards the Irish language (Devitt et al., 2018).

Children in Irish-medium schools have increased opportunities to engage in Drama, Music, and Physical Education (McCoy, Quail and Smyth, 2012b). Engagement with cultural aspects during schooling especially supports their academic achievement (McCoy, Quail, and Smyth, 2012a). Children also report that they really enjoy these curricular areas (Kiely et al., 2024).

Children in immersion education deepen their understanding of Irish culture, allowing them to share in a unique and rich strand of the cultural heritage of Irish society (CNCM, 2019). They demonstrate an awareness of historical events and folklore, as well as symbols of European identity (Lennon Malbasha, Dautel and Taylor, 2022). They also show an interest in developing intercultural awareness (Kiely et al., 2024).

Cognitive Advantages

Research into the impact of school-based bilingualism in Ireland demonstrates that it has no negative impact on executive function, namely, the ability to recall, classify and sort objects etc. (Kennedy, 2012). Children in Irish-medium schools show advantages in engaging in complex executive function tasks (Stephens, 2013), consistent with international research (Bialystok, 2009). They also show advantages in metalinguistic skills, namely, being able to think about and discuss different aspects of language e.g. grammar and syntax (Dillon, 2009; Harris and O'Leary, 2012; Kiely et al., 2024; Prats Porcar, 2013).

Summary

Irish-medium education supports children's holistic development. On the whole, children in immersion education do as well or better, compared to children in English-medium schools, and they gain a range of advantages in different areas. Children come to school with different talents, interests, and needs. Every child can benefit from Irish-medium education provided there are inclusive pedagogies, and whole-school planning, as well as appropriate resources available.

Growth and Development of Irish-Medium Education

Bilingual education dates back to Roman and Greek times, and today, immersion and bilingual programmes are available in the majority of countries around the world (Hornberger, 2008; Ó Brolcháin, 2015). Ireland is no exception, and has a rich and interesting history when it comes to immersion education. Irish-medium education is important, not just in terms of language revitalisation, but also in terms of providing choice in education types, and supporting parental involvement. Irish-medium education has grown and developed over the years. Some of the key developments are outlined below.

1908 – Pádraig Mac Piarais founded Scoil Éanna where subjects were taught bilingually.

1917 – Luíse Ghabhánach Ní Dhufaigh and Áine Nic Aodha co-founded the first Irish-medium school.

1922 – Immersion education was introduced in infant classes in the Free State.

1952 – Scoil Lorcáin, the first Irish-medium primary school in the Republic of Ireland, was founded in Dublin. Other Irish-medium primary schools began to emerge later, including Scoil Neasáin (1969), Scoil an tSeachtar Laoch (1973) and Scoil Naithí (1973).

1960s – Native speakers gathered to form an urban Gaeltacht on the Shaw's Road in West Belfast.

1969 – Coláiste Eoin was founded, followed by Coláiste Íosagáin (1971), in order to provide an option for Irish-medium post-primary education.

1970s – Parents, families and educators came together to establish more Irish-medium schools.

1971 – Bunscoil Phobal Feirste was founded, the first Irish-medium school in Northern Ireland.

1972 – Comhdháil na Scoileanna Gaelacha (Congress of Irish-Medium Schools) was founded in Galway.

1973 – Comhchoiste Náisiúnta na Scoileanna Gaeilge (Joint National Committee of Irish-Medium Schools), was founded in Dublin.

1974-1976 – The two organisations subsequently branded as Gaelscoileanna Teo. now operating as Gaeloideachas, came together to support the growth in Irish-medium education.

1981 – Coláiste Chilliaín was founded in Clondalkin, the first Irish-medium post-primary school outside of the Gaeltacht under the auspices of Na Coistí Gairmoideachais (Committees for Vocational Education).

1983 – The first all-Irish centre in Northern Ireland was established in Derry City.

1987 – Eagraíocht na Scoileanna Gaeltachta (Organisation for Gaeltacht schools) was founded.

1990s – More support is available for immersion education in Northern Ireland due to the Good Friday Agreement (1998), The Education Order (1998) and the establishment of Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (2000), and Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta (2001).

1991 – The first post-primary school, Coláiste Feirste (Meánscoil Feirste) was established in Northern Ireland. Gaeloiliúint was also founded, the first umbrella organisation for Irish-medium schools in Northern Ireland.

1993 – An Foras Pátrúnachta was established in order to provide a further option for new Irish-medium schools in terms of patronage and is now the biggest patron of Irish-medium schools.

1993 – Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Álainn was founded in Cork, the first Irish-medium multid denominational school.

1995 – An Irish-medium Postgraduate Certificate in Education was started in Coláiste Ollscoile Naomh Muire (St. Mary's University College), Belfast. The following year, the first cohort of Irish-medium BEd students commenced their degree through the medium of Irish.

1996 – Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin was founded in Wicklow, the first Irish-medium interdenominational school.

1998 – The Higher Diploma in Education, a post-primary qualification, was launched at the University of Galway. Since 2014 this is known as the Professional Master of Education.

2002 – An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta. (COGG) was established.

2011 – A Masters in Irish-Medium Education commenced in Coláiste Ollscoile Naomh Muire (St. Mary's University College), Belfast.

2013 – A Masters in Irish-Medium and Gaeltacht Education commenced in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. From 2023, this Masters is delivered by Trinity College Dublin.

2016 – The Policy for Gaeltacht Education was published and the Gaeltacht Education Unit was established in the Department of Education.

2019 – The first cohort started the Bachelor of Education through the medium of Irish in Marino Institute of Education.

2024 – The national consultation on Irish-medium education outside of the Gaeltacht was published and a new policy on Irish-medium education outside of the Gaeltacht is currently being developed by the Department of Education.

Supporting your Child in Irish-Medium Education

The involvement of parents, family and other important people in the child's life, is central to the vision for immersion education in Ireland. Parents, families and educators work together to found and continually support Irish-medium schools. Parents and families have different levels of confidence in using Irish, but a positive attitude to and interest in the language can make a big difference (Harris et al., 2006). No two parents or families are the same, and everyone brings with them their own experiences and talents. These experiences and talents can be drawn upon to support your child's educational journey in a number of different ways.

- Support your child's literacy skills in your native language. Enjoy reading stories together at home.
- If you live in the Gaeltacht, familiarise yourself with the events organised by Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta, as well as the resources for parents and families, available at www.tuismitheoiri.ie.
- Praise your child for their efforts in speaking and using Irish.
- Ask your child to teach you something they have learned in Irish e.g. a poem or a song.
- Familiarise yourself with different areas of the curriculum that your child will be learning in order to support their homework. Information and support are available on the www.gaeloideachas.ie page, under the Tuismitheoirí / Parents section.
- Familiarise yourself with the learning resources for children available at www.cogg.ie, under the section An Tairseach.
- Use the resources available at www.ncca.ie, in the Gaeilge sa Bhaile / Irish at Home section, to use the Irish you have in a fun way with your child.
- Find out more about the supports for parents and families, who wish to increase their use of Irish at home, available at www.glornangael.ie/teangati/comhairle/.
- Participate in bilingual / plurilingual events at school.
- Find out whether there are Irish / plurilingual events taking place in your community, e.g. the Mother Tongues festival.



Conclusion

Immersion education in Ireland has a rich and interesting history, and there continues to be an interest in and demand for Irish-medium schools. Some parents even have personal experience of the immersion education system themselves. Children in Irish-medium schools have the opportunity to engage in all areas of the curriculum, as well as acquiring Irish and enriching their language skills. Irish-medium schools support the development of language and literacy skills in English, and in Irish in particular. On the whole, children in immersion education perform as well or better in terms of English, than children in English-medium schools. In addition to this, children acquire the Irish language and develop positive attitudes towards the language.

Irish-medium schools contribute to linguistic diversity in Ireland by creating a space in which children can have regular contact with the Irish language. This experience helps children to become part of the contemporary international bilingual / plurilingual community. It is acknowledged in the research and in the Primary Language Curriculum (2019) that there is a continuum of bilingualism / plurilingualism and that people use their language repertoire in different ways and in different contexts.

To get the most out of Irish-medium education, it is necessary to foster strong links between the school, the home, and the community, and to work together to promote a whole-school approach. At each stage of the educational journey, language support and other types of support are required, both inside the classroom and outside of it, in order for children to reach their full potential.

Children in Irish-medium schools, like all children, have a variety of talents, needs, interests and personalities. They need some of the same supports as children in English-medium schools, but they also need special supports in terms of the Irish language. Irish-medium education can support all children on their educational journey, provided there are inclusive pedagogies, whole-school planning, as well as resources available.

The full research report, *An Tumoideachas ag an mBunleibhéal in Éirinn: Léargais ón Taighde Náisiúnta / Immersion Education at Primary Level in Ireland: Insights from National Research*, which examines in closer detail the studies that underpin this handbook, can be found at www.cogg.ie. It is hoped that the report will be of help to anyone undertaking research on Irish-medium education.

Over the coming years, we can learn from the experiences of Irish-medium schools in different settings and contexts, in order to provide sustainable support so that parents and families can continue to choose immersion education. The Department of Education is currently developing a policy for Irish-medium education outside of the Gaeltacht, following the publication of the Policy on Gaeltacht Education (DES, 2016). COGG and Institiúid Oideachais Marino would like to express their thanks to Claire M. Dunne for preparing this handbook and the full research report.



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