

# Staid Reatha na Scoileanna Gaeltachta A Study of Gaeltacht Schools 2004

AN CHOMHAIRLE UM OIDEACHAS GAELTACHTA AGUS GAELSCOLAÍOCHTA

## ACHOIMRE SUMMARY

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Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta



**Bealtaine 2005**



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# BROLLACH

**I**mí Iúil 2003 d'iarr an Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta ar Oifig na Gaeilge Labhartha, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh i gcomhar leis An Díseart, An Daingean, mórthaighde a dhéanamh ar staid reatha scoileanna Gaeltachta. Cuireadh tús leis an taighde seo i mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2003 le sraith cruinnithe a reáchtáladh ar an gCeathrú Rua, i gCaisleán an Bharraigh, i Leitir Ceanainn agus sa Daingean chun na scoileanna a chur ar an eolas faoin gComhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta mar chúla don taighde, chomh maith le cur i láthair a dhéanamh ar chuspóirí an taighde agus ar an gcur chuige a bheadh in úsáid.

Sa tréimhse idir mí na Samhna 2003 agus mí an Mhárta 2004 scaipeadh ceistneoir ar gach bunscoil agus iarbhunscoil sa Gaeltacht ag lorg eolais faoi dhaltáí, faoi fhoireann agus faoi chóiríocht agus áiseanna na scoile, i measc rudaí eile. Sa tréimhse sin, freisin, bhí deis ag an bhfoireann taighde cuairt a thabhairt ar na scoileanna chun bualadh leis na príomhoidí agus an t-eolas a bhí á bhailiú a phlé leo. Tá cur síos sa tuarascáil seo ar thorthaí an phróisis sin.

Tá an fhoireann taighde fíorbhuíoch de na príomhoidí agus de na múinteoirí i mbunscoileanna agus in iarbhunscoileanna na Gaeltachta as an dua a chuir siad orthu féin na ceistneoirí a chuireamar chucu a líonadh agus as an bhfáilte a chuir siad romhainn agus muid ar cuairt chuig a gcuid scoileanna. B'ábhar misnigh dúinn bualadh leo agus b'ábhar misnigh, a dúirt go leor acu linn, go raibh an taighde seo á dhéanamh. Bhí súil acu, a dúirt siad, go dtabharfaí aird ar thorthaí an taighde agus go ndéanfaí freastal níos fearr ar riachtanais dhaltáí agus mhúinteoirí na Gaeltachta dá bharr.

Táimid fíorbhuíoch freisin den Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta as an tacaíocht a chuir siad ar fáil dúinn agus muid i mbun oibre. Tá focal buíochais ar leith ag dul don Chathaoirleach Breandán Mac Cormaic agus do Phríomhfheidhmeannach na Comhairle Muireann Ní Mhóráin agus do bhaill an Fhochoiste Polasaí agus Pleanála a d'fheidhmigh mar Choiste Stiúrtha don tionscadal agus a thug cúnaimh agus spreagadh dúinn i rith an ama. Táimid an-bhuíoch freisin d'Aisling Nic Craith, Feidhmeannach Riaracháin na Comhairle agus do Bhláthnaid Ní Chreacháin, Comhairleoir Taighde na Comhairle, as a dtacaíocht agus a gcúnaimh ó chumhar i mbun an tionscadail seo.

Fuairéamar cúnaimh agus comhairle ó dhaoine éagsúla agus muid i mbun an tionscadail agus táimid fíorbhuíoch díobh go léir. Orthu seo bhí Gloria Avalos ón Roinn Dochtúireacht Teaghlaiigh agus Leighis, in Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh a chuir comhairle orainn faoin gcóras staitisticíúil SPSS; John Newell ó Roinn na Matamaitice, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh a chuir comhairle staitisticíúil ar fáil dúinn; Séamas Ó Coileáin ó Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge agus an comhlacht aistriúcháin Abair Leat a chabhraigh linn profáil agus eagarthóireacht a dhéanamh ar an leagan deireadh den tuarascáil.

*Seosamh Mac Donnacha  
Samhain 2004*

# FOREWORD

In July 2003 An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta commissioned Oifig na Gaeilge Labhartha, NUIG and An Díseart, to undertake a major study of Gaeltacht schools. The project was initiated in October 2003 with a series of meetings which were held in An Cheathrú Rua, Co. Galway, in An Daingean, Co. Kerry, in Castlebar and in Letterkenny, for the purposes of introducing the research project to schools and informing them of the work of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta and the background to the research.

In the period between November 2003 and March 2004 a questionnaire was sent to every primary and post-primary school in the Gaeltacht, which sought information concerning, inter alia, the pupils, staff, accommodation and facilities of the school. In addition the research team visited each school and discussed the information being sought with the school principal. This report is the end result of that process.

The Research Team would like to thank the school principals and teachers for the welcome and support they gave us when visiting their schools and for completing the questionnaires sent to them. Our meetings with them were a source of encouragement and many of them informed us that this research project was a source of encouragement for them. They trusted that the recommendations made as a result of this research would be implemented and that this would result in a better support system for Gaeltacht pupils and teachers.

We would also like to thank An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta for the support given to us during the project, in particular the Chairperson, Breandán Mac Cormaic, the Chief Executive, Muireann Ní Mhóráin and the members of An Chomhairle's Policy and Planning sub-committee who were the Steering Committee for this research project. We are also grateful for the assistance given to us by Aisling Nic Craith, An Chomhairle's Administrative Executive and by Bláthnaid Ní Ghreacháin An Chomhairle's Research Advisor.

We are indebted to the many people who assisted us and provided advice during our work on this project. These include Gloria Avalos from the Department of General Practice and Medicine at NUIG who provided advice on the use of the SPSS statistical software; John Newell from the Department of Mathematics at NUIG, who provided statistical advice, Séamus Ó Coileáin from Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge and the translation company Abair Leat who assisted with the proofing and editing of the report.

*Seosamh Mac Donnacha*  
*November 2004*



# RÉAMHRÁ

**B**unaíodh an Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta i 2002 faoi Acht 31 den Acht Oideachais (1998) agus cuireadh cúrsaí taighde i measc na bhfeidhmeanna a bhaineann leis an gComhairle. Le tús a chur le hobair na Comhairle, cinneadh tuairiscí a fháil ar riachtanais na scoileanna Gaeltachta. Mar thoradh ar na tuairiscí sin, braitheadh go raibh gá ann tabhairt faoi réiteach a aimsiú do na dúshláin agus na deacrachtaí a rianáíodh, ach chuige sin nár mhór don Chomhairle eolas cruinn a bheith ar fáil faoi staid reatha na mbunscoileanna agus na n-iar-bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta.

Bheartaigh an Chomhairle, dá bhrí sin, taighde a thionscnamh ar an ábhar. I ndiaidh próiseas tairisceana cuireadh tús le comhpháirtíocht idir Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh agus An Díséart, An Daingean leis an taighde a dhéanamh. Taighde staitistiúil, cainníochtúil a rinneadh agus tá pictiúr cuimsitheach cruinn ar fáil anois faoi staid reatha scoileanna na Gaeltachta, go háirithe mar a bhaineann leis an nGaeilge féin. Sárobair chuimsitheach údarásach is ea í agus tá an Chomhairle fíor-bhuíoch de údair na tuarascála - ach go háirithe de Sheosamh Mac Donncha ó Acadamh na Gaeilge, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe a stiúir an taighde.

Ní hí seo an chéad uair, ar ndóigh, a rinneadh taighde ar chúrsaí oideachais sa Ghaeltacht. Foilsíodh Tuarascáil Choimisiún na Gaeltachta i 1926. D'eisigh Comhar na Múinteoirí Gaeilge tuarascáil ar an mBunoidéachas sa Ghaeltacht i 1981 agus foilsíodh Tuarascáil an Chomhchoiste um Oideachas sa Ghaeltacht i 1986 - comhchoiste idir-rannach státchórais. Chomh maith leis sin d'fhoilsigh Údarás na Gaeltachta tuarascáil ar an Luathoidéachas trí Ghaeilge sa Ghaeltacht i 1999 agus d'fhoilsigh Muintearas an doiciméad Gnéithe den Oideachas Gaeltachta-Impleachtaí Polasáí i 2000. Phléigh Tuarascáil Chomhairle na nÓg (2001) cúrsaí oideachais sa Ghaeltacht freisin agus foilsíodh Tuarascáil Choimisiún na Gaeltachta i 2002.

Is léir nach raibh aon ghanntanas tuarascálacha ann ach is beag toradh a bhí ar aon cheann díobh agus deirtear lom díreach sa tuarascáil seo:

*‘Tá práinn le feidhm a thabhairt do mholtaí na tuarascála seo. Is mó fós an phráinn de bharr gur beag atá sa tuarascáil seo nár tugadh chun solais roimhe seo i dtuarascálacha eile. Níor tharla mórán mar thoradh ar fhoilsiú na dtuarascálacha sin rud a d’fhág lagmhisneach agus frustrachas ar na múinteoirí a rinne ionchur iontu. Is buille tubaisteach eile do mheanna mhúinteoirí agus thuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta a bheadh ann dá dtarlódh an rud céanna mar thoradh ar fhoilsiú na tuarascála seo.’*

Agus mar bharr air sin, tuairiscítear:

*‘Go bhfuil fianaise againn in Ó Cinnéide et al. (2001), go gcuireann a dtaitheí ar an gcóras oideachais sa Ghaeltacht lagmhisneach ar go leor thuismitheoirí Gaeltachta atá ag tógáil a leanaí le Gaeilge. Braitheann a lán acu go gcealaíonn an córas oideachais a n-iaracht féin saíocht na Gaeilge agus na Gaeltachta a thabhairt dá gcuid páistí agus dílseacht phearsanta don Ghaeilge a chothú iontu.’*

*Lena bhfuil sa Tuarascáil seo a phoiblíú agus le plé a spreagadh, tá sé i gceist ag an gComhairle tátail agus torthaí na tuarascála a chur i láthair na n-áisíneachtaí agus an phobail a bhfuil baint acu le hoideachas sa Ghaeltacht. Chomh maith le sin tabharfar grúpaí fócais le chéile leis na moltaí a phlé. Ag deireadh an phróisis sin cuirfear moltaí na Comhairle faoi bhráid an Aire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta.*

An bhfeidhmeoidh na húdaráis chuí an uair seo? Tá na bun straitéis riachtanacha leagtha amach go soiléir sa Tuarascáil seo ach an gcuirfear straitéis comhtháite i bhfeidhm ar bhonn cuimsitheach fadtréimhseach nó an ndéanfar mionathrú anseo agus ansiúd mar a rinneadh cheana agus gan toradh fónta dá bharr? Neosfaidh an aimsir, ar ndóigh, ach mar a deirtear sa tuarascáil:

*Tá todhchaí na Gaeltachta fite fuaite le todhchaí an chórais oideachais sa Ghaeltacht. Dá réir sin, mura bhfaightear réiteach go luath ar an gcrúachás géarchéime ina bhfuil an córas oideachais Gaeltachta i láthair na huair, tá todhchaí na Gaeltachta féin i mbaol.*

**Breandán Mac Cormaic**

**Cathaoirleach**

**An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta**

# INTRODUCTION



An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta was established in 2002 under the terms of Article 31 of the Education Act (1998) with research as one of its statutory functions. As a result of information gathered with regard to the needs of Gaeltacht schools An Chomhairle decided to seek out solutions to the challenges and difficulties being encountered in these schools. In order to do that, precise information about the current state of primary and post-primary schools was needed and to this end a research project was initiated.

Following a tendering process, a partnership between Acadamh na Gaeilge, NUIG and An Díseart was set up to carry out a quantitative statistical study which has provided a clear and comprehensive picture of the current state of Gaeltacht schools, especially in relation to the Irish language. An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta is grateful to the authors of this excellent authoritative report, especially Seosamh Mac Donnacha of Acadamh na Gaeilge who directed the project.

This is not the first time however that research has been carried out into Gaeltacht education. Tuarascáil Choimisiún na Gaeltachta was published in 1926, Comhar na Múinteoirí Gaeilge published a report on Gaeltacht education in 1981, and the report by the joint committee on Education in the Gaeltacht - an interdepartmental committee - was published in 1986. Údarás na Gaeltachta published its report on Irish medium Gaeltacht pre-school education in 1999 and Muintearas published a report on Policy Implications of Gaeltacht Education in 2000. Gaeltacht education was discussed in the National Youth Council report in 2001 and the Gaeltacht Commission Report was published in 2002.

But, while there is no shortage of reports there is little evidence of any results as is clearly stated in this report:

*'It is urgent to implement the recommendations of this report. This is particularly true as there is little in it that has not previously come to light. Nothing much happened as a result of other reports which led to low morale and frustration amongst the teachers who participated in the studies. It would be a terrible blow to Gaeltacht teachers and parents if this report meets the same fate.'*

Added to that, it is reported:

*'There is evidence from Ó Cinnéide et al (2001) that their experience of Gaeltacht education demoralises many parents who are raising children through Irish. Many feel that the educational system cancels their efforts to pass Irish as a living language on to their children and to develop a personal loyalty to the language.'*

In order to publicise the content of this report and to instigate discussion, it is intended to present the conclusions and recommendations to the various agencies working in the Gaeltacht as well as to the educational community in the Gaeltacht. Focus groups will also be formed to discuss the report's findings. At the end of the process An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta will present its own recommendations to the Minister for Education and Science.

Will the authorities respond this time? The necessary basic strategies are set out clearly in this report but will an integrated strategy be implemented on a comprehensive long term basis or will minor changes be made as happened before with no positive outcome? Time will tell but as is stated in this report:

*'The future of the Gaeltacht is intertwined with the future of the education system in the Gaeltacht. Therefore, if there is no resolution to the present crisis in the educational system, the future of the Gaeltacht is at risk.'*

**Breandán Mac Cormaic**  
**Cathaoirleach**  
**An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta**

## 1. MODHEOLAÍOCHT

Is tuarascáil í seo ar thaighde a rinne Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh agus An Díseart, An Daingean, ar staid reatha na scoileanna Gaeltachta don Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta.

Tá an taighde bunaithe ar cheistneoirí a dáileadh ar phríomhoidí bunscoileanna Gaeltachta i mí na Samhna 2003 agus ar phríomhoidí na n-iar-bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta i mí Eanáir 2004. Tugadh cuairt ar na scoileanna chun na ceistneoirí a bhailiú agus chun labhairt leis na príomhoidí sa tréimhse idir Nollaig 2003 – Márta 2004. D'fhreagair 129 (90%) bunscoil as an 143 bunscoil sa Ghaeltacht an ceistneoir agus d'fhreagair 27 (90%) iar-bhunscoil as an 30 iar-bhunscoil sa Ghaeltacht an ceistneoir.

## 2. STAIR AN OIDEACHAIS SA GHAELTACHT

Faoi fhorálacha an Achta Oideachais 1998, sainítear an Ghaeltacht mar na limistéir sin atá aitheanta mar limistéir Ghaeltachta faoi fhorálacha Acht na nAirí agus Rúnaithe (Leasú) 1956 agus deirtear in Alt 9(h) den Acht "gur feidhm de chuid scoileanna Gaeltachta í cuidiú leis an nGaeilge a choinneáil mar phríomhtheanga an phobail."

I measc na dtuarascálacha a déanadh ar oideachas Gaeltachta roimhe seo nó a bhfuil tagairtí suntasacha iontu don chóras oideachais sa Ghaeltacht tá: Tuarascáil Choimisiún na Gaeltachta (1926), Tuarascáil ar an mBunoideachas sa Ghaeltacht (1981), Tuarascáil an Chomhchoiste um Oideachas sa Ghaeltacht (1986), Gnéithe den Oideachas sa Ghaeltacht: Impleachtaí Polasaí (Muintearas 2000), Tuarascáil Choiste Comhairleach na nÓg (2001), agus Tuarascálacha Choimisiún na Gaeltachta (2002; agus Ó Cinnéide et al, 2001). Léiríonn athbhreithniú ar na tuarascálacha seo go bhfuil éirithe leis an Stát córas bunoidreachais agus iar-bhunoideachais trí mheán na Gaeilge a chruthú sa Ghaeltacht, ach go bhfuil an córas sin go mór faoi bhrú fós de bharr na gcúinsí teanga ina bhfuil sé ag feidhmiú agus de bharr laigí sna córais tacaíochta atá de dhíth chun gur féidir soláthar oideachais Ghaeltachta den scoth a chur ar fáil.

Eascaíonn na deacrachtaí sin, go háirithe le 30 bliain anuas, as na hathruithe atá tagtha ar phatrúin teanga an phobail a fhágann go bhfuil an scoil Ghaeltachta agus an múinteoir ranga ag déileáil le grúpaí daltaí ag a bhfuil raon leathan cumas sa teanga atá in úsáid mar mheán teagaisc i bhformhór na scoileanna. Is léir, áfach, go bhfuil toiscaí eile i bhfeidhm a chuireann go mór leis an gcastacht a bhaineann leis an staid seo agus a dhéanann níos deacra é réiteach sásúil inbhuanaithe a fháil ar na deacrachtaí a eascraíonn as. Orthu sin tá:

- Gur scoileanna beaga iad formhór na scoileanna Gaeltachta, rud a fhágann gur deacair freastal ar leith a dhéanamh ar pháistí a bhfuil riachtanais teanga ar leith acu.
- Go bhfuiltear ag iarraidh freastail ar riachtanais na scoileanna Gaeltachta laistigh den chóras atá ann chun freastail ar scoileanna na tíre i gcoitinne. Fágann sé seo, go ndéantar iarracht córais agus próisis atá ann a chur in oiriúint do, agus in amanna a bhrú ar, scoileanna agus ar dhaltaí Gaeltachta, in ionad córais agus próisis a fhorbairt atá deartha ón tús le freastal ar na riachtanais ar leith atá acu.

## 3. PRÍOMHTHORTHAÍ AN TAIGHDE

Tá na tosca faoina bhfuil scoileanna Gaeltachta ag feidhmiú an-éagsúil óna chéile ag brath ar an gceantar ina bhfuil an scoil suite agus ar staid na teanga i measc phobal an cheantair sin. Chun é seo a chur san áireamh san anailís ar an eolas a chuir na scoileanna ar fáil beartaíodh na scoileanna a chatagóiriú de réir



## 1. METHODOLOGY

This report is a summary of research carried out by Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaelige, National University of Ireland, Galway and An Díseart, An Daingean for An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta into the current situation in Gaeltacht schools.

The research is based on a questionnaire distributed to Gaeltacht primary school Principals in November 2003 and to Gaeltacht post-primary school principals in January 2004. The schools were visited by a member of the research team to collect the questionnaires and to speak to the principals during the period from December 2003 to March 2004. 129 (90%) primary schools from a total of 143 Gaeltacht primary schools and 27 (90%) post-primary schools from a total of 30 Gaeltacht post-primary schools returned the questionnaire.

## 2. THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN THE GAELTACHT

Under the provisions of the Education Act, 1998, the Gaeltacht is defined as those areas which are recognised as Gaeltacht areas under the provisions of the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act, 1956, and Section 9(h) of the Act states that the functions of a school located in a Gaeltacht area, include contributing "to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language".

Previous reports on Gaeltacht education and reports with substantial references to the education system in the Gaeltacht include: Tuarascáil Choimisiún na Gaeltachta (1926), Tuarascáil ar an mBunoideachas sa Ghaeltacht (1981), Tuarascáil an Chomhchoiste um Oideachas sa Ghaeltacht (1986), Gnéithe den Oideachas sa Ghaeltacht: Impleachtaí Polasaí (Muintearas 2000), Tuarascáil Choiste Comhairleach na nÓg (2001), and Tuarascálacha Choimisiún na Gaeltachta (2002; and Ó Cinnéide et al, 2001). A review of these reports concludes that the State has succeeded in developing an Irish-medium primary and post-primary education system for the Gaeltacht, but that this education sector still faces major challenges due to the complex linguistic composition of the community it serves and the absence of the type of support system required by schools if they are to provide a first class Gaeltacht education.

These difficulties have been exacerbated, particularly over the last 30 years, as a result of changes in the linguistic composition of the Gaeltacht community. These changes have resulted in the majority of Gaeltacht schools and their teachers having to teach classes comprised of pupils with a wide range of varying abilities in the language of instruction of the school. It is clear, however, that other factors exist that add to the complexity of this situation and make it increasingly difficult to achieve a satisfactory and sustainable solution to the difficulties faced by Gaeltacht schools. These include the fact that:

- The majority of Gaeltacht schools are small schools. As a result it is more difficult for them to accommodate the needs of pupils with a wide range of linguistic abilities.
- Gaeltacht schools are being supported within a system that is designed to support the English-medium education sector. This results in existing systems and processes being adapted for, and sometimes being imposed upon, Gaeltacht schools and pupils, with very little effort being made to develop systems and processes appropriate to their needs.

## 3. KEY RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The circumstances in which Gaeltacht schools operate differ widely depending on the area in which the school is located and the status of the Irish language within that particular community. In order to account for this in our analysis of the information provided by schools, it was decided to divide the schools into three categories,

líon na gcainteoirí laethúla Gaeilge sa cheantar ina bhfuil an scoil suite (ag úsáid na sonraí ó Dhaonáireamh 2002 maidir leis an gcéatadán daonra a labhraíonn an Ghaeilge go laethúil), mar seo a leanas:

**Catagóir A:** Scoileanna atá suite i gceantar ina labhraíonn 70%+ den phobal an Ghaeilge go laethúil.

**Catagóir B:** Scoileanna atá suite i gceantar ina labhraíonn idir 40% agus 69% den phobal an Ghaeilge go laethúil.

**Catagóir C:** Scoileanna atá suite i gceantar ina labhraíonn níos lú ná 39% den phobal an Ghaeilge go laethúil.

**TÁBLA 1:**  
NA SCOILEANNA A  
GHLAC PÁIRT SA  
TAIGHDE DE RÉIR  
CATAGÓRA,  
BUNAITHE AR LÍON  
NA GCAINTEOIRÍ  
LAETHÚLA GAEILGE  
SA CHEANTAR INA  
BHFUIL AN SCOIL  
SUITE

Bunscoileanna			
Catagóir	Líon Scoileanna	Líon Teaghlach	Líon Daltaí
Catagóir A	39	1459	2226
Catagóir B	21	744	1320
Catagóir C	69	2740	4544
<b>Iomlán</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>4943</b>	<b>8090</b>
Iar-bhunscoileanna			
Catagóir	Líon Scoileanna	Líon Teaghlach	Líon Daltaí
Catagóir A	9	969	1328
Catagóir B	7	1066	1420
Catagóir C	11	1604	2093
<b>Iomlán</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3639</b>	<b>4841</b>

Léiríonn Tábla 1 na sonraí maidir le líon na scoileanna, líon na dteaghlach agus líon na ndaltaí sna catagóirí éagsúla. Tá na catagóirí seo bunaithe ar na toghcheantair sa Ghaeltacht de bharr gur ag an leibhéal sin a chuirtear sonraí ón Daonáireamh ar fáil. Ní féidir a bheith iomlán cruinn leis an gcur chuige seo de bharr gur minic daltaí a bhfuil cónaí orthu i dtoghcheantar amháin bheith ag freastal ar scoil atá suite i dtoghcheantar eile. In ainneoin seo, áfach, tugann an cur chuige seo deis dúinn anailís a dhéanamh ar chúinsí teanga i scoileanna atá ag feidhmiú faoi thoscaí atá cosúil lena chéile.

### 3.1 Bunscoileanna na Gaeltachta

Is 143 bunscoil atá sa Ghaeltacht agus 9,556 dalta ag freastal orthu. Tá titim leanúnach tagtha ar líon iomlán na ndaltaí le 6 bliana anuas. Is scoileanna beaga 1-3 oide iad formhór (69%) na mbunscoileanna Gaeltachta. Tháinig laghdú ar líon na ndaltaí in dhá thrian (66 as 98 scoil) de na bunscoileanna seo sa tréimhse 1998-2002. I gcás 58 scoil acu seo bhí an titim níos mó na 10% agus tá 18 scoil 1-3 oide inar thit líon na ndaltaí níos mó ná 30%.

Bíonn deacrachtaí ag cuid mhaith bunscoileanna ag earcú múinteoirí do na folúntais a bhíonn acu. Sa tréimhse 2001-2003, níor líonadh 18% de na poist a fógraíodh i mbunscoileanna Gaeltachta agus ní bhfuarthas ach trí iarratas nó níos lú ar 68% acu. Ní bhfuarthas iarratas ar bith ar 13% de na poist a fógraíodh. Is léir go mbíonn deacracht faoi leith ag scoileanna beaga 1-3 oide le poist a líonadh, in ainneoin gur sna scoileanna seo a bhíonn formhór na bpost á dtairiscint. As 92 folúntas a fógraíodh sna bunscoileanna seo sa tréimhse 2001-2003 níor líonadh 22 post acu ar an gcéad iarracht, ní bhfuarthas iarratas ar bith ar 18 post acu, agus ní bhfuarthas ach iarratas amháin ar 27 post eile.

depending on the number of daily speakers of Irish living in the schools catchment area (using data from the 2002 Census relating to the percentage of the population who speak Irish on a daily basis), as follows:

**Category A:** Schools located in areas in which 70%+ of the population speak Irish on a daily basis.

**Category B:** Schools located in areas in which between 40% and 69% of the population speak Irish on a daily basis.

**Category C:** Schools located in areas in which less than 39% of the population speak Irish on a daily basis.

**TABLE 1:**  
SCHOOLS THAT  
RESPONDED TO THE  
SURVEY  
CATAGORISED BY  
THE NUMBER OF  
DAILY IRISH  
SPEAKERS IN THE  
SCHOOLS  
CATCHMENT AREA

Primary Schools			
Category	Number of Schools	Number of Families	Number of Pupils
Category A	39	1459	2226
Category B	21	744	1320
Category C	69	2740	4544
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>4943</b>	<b>8090</b>
Post-Primary Schools			
Category	Number of Schools	Number of Families	Number of Pupils
Category A	9	969	1328
Category B	7	1066	1420
Category C	11	1604	2093
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3639</b>	<b>4841</b>

Table 1 contains data concerning the number of schools, families and pupils in each category. The categories are based on the electoral divisions in the Gaeltacht as census data is presented in this form. It is important to note here that the boundaries of the electoral divisions do not always coincide with the relevant school catchment area and that students living in one electoral division may attend a school located in a different electoral division. Nevertheless, this approach allows us to categorise schools into groups that are operating in similar linguistic circumstances, for the purposes of making statistical comparisons.

### 3.1 Gaeltacht Primary Schools

There are 143 primary schools with 9,556 pupils in the Gaeltacht. The total number of pupils has been decreasing continuously over the last 6 years. The majority (69%) of Gaeltacht primary schools are small 1-3 teacher schools. The number of pupils decreased in two thirds (66 out of 98) of these schools in the period 1998-2002. In the case of 58 of these schools, the decrease was in excess of 10% and the number of pupils decreased by more than 30% in 18 of the 1-3 teacher schools.

Gaeltacht primary schools find it difficult to recruit teachers to fill vacancies that arise. In the period 2001-2003, 18% of the posts advertised in Gaeltacht primary schools were not filled and three applications or less were received in the case of 68% of the positions advertised. Of the posts advertised 13% failed to attract any applications. It is evident that small 1-3 teacher schools have particular difficulties in filling posts, notwithstanding the fact that the majority of posts advertised relate to these schools. From a total of 92 vacancies advertised in 1-3 teacher primary schools in the period 2001-2003, 22 posts remained vacant on the first attempt, 18 posts received no application, and only one application was received in relation to the other 27 posts.

Tá céatadán suntasach (26%) de dhaltaí na Gaeltachta a rugadh nó a bhí á dtógáil lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht sular thosaigh siad ag freastal ar an scoil sa Ghaeltacht. Tá 9% de na daltaí ina gconaí lasmuigh den limistéar oifigiúil Gaeltachta agus ag freastal ar 33 scoil laistigh den Ghaeltacht.

### 3.1.1 Cumas Gaeilge na nDaltaí

#### Bunscoileanna Chatagóir A

Tá Gaeilge líofa nó Gaeilge mhaith ag 54% de na daltaí i rang na naíonán beag sna scoileanna seo. Méadaíonn an céatadán seo go leanúnach suas go dtí rang 6, áit a bhfuil Gaeilge líofa nó mhaith ag 87% de na daltaí. Ar an iomlán, is léir gurb iad na daltaí ag a bhfuil Gaeilge líofa an grúpa is mó sna scoileanna seo agus go méadaíonn líon na ndaltaí sa ghrúpa sin de réir mar a bhogtar suas sna ranganna.

#### Bunscoileanna Chatagóir B

Tá Gaeilge líofa nó Gaeilge mhaith ag 24% de na daltaí i rang na naíonán beag sna scoileanna seo. Ardaíonn sé seo go leanúnach go dtí 81% i rang 5 agus titeann sé go dtí 79% i rang 6. Is léir gurb iad na daltaí ag a bhfuil Gaeilge mhaith an grúpa is líonmhaire sna scoileanna seo. Cé go dtiteann líon na ndaltaí atá ar bheagán nó gan aon Ghaeilge de réir mar a bhogtar suas sna ranganna, tá céatadán suntasach de na daltaí sna bunscoileanna seo ar bheagán nó gan aon Ghaeilge fiú sna hardranganna.

#### Bunscoileanna Chatagóir C

Is i gCatagóir C atá an grúpa is mó bunscoileanna, ag 69 scoil. Tá 4544 dalta ag freastal ar na scoileanna seo, eadhon, 56% de dhaltaí bunscoile na Gaeltachta. Is léir gur treise i bhfad iad na daltaí atá gan aon Ghaeilge sna bunranganna sna scoileanna seo ach go n-éiríonn leis na scoileanna cabhrú le cuid mhaith de na daltaí seo cumas measartha nó maith Gaeilge a shealbhú agus iad sna hardranganna. Ar an iomlán is féidir na daltaí sna scoileanna seo a roinnt go cothrom i dtrí ghrúpa. Tá circa aon trian acu a thagann ar scoil agus Gaeilge mhaith nó líofa acu nó a shealbhaíonn an cumas sin i rith a mblianta sa scoil. Tá circa aon trian eile acu a thagann ar scoil agus Gaeilge mheasartha acu nó a shealbhaíonn an cumas teanga sin ar scoil. Agus tá aon trian eile atá comhdhéanta de dhaltaí sna bunranganna atá díreach tar éis teacht ar scoil ar bheagán Gaeilge nó gan aon Ghaeilge agus grúpa eile sna hardranganna nach bhfuil ag éirí leo ach leibhéal íseal Gaeilge a shealbhú.

### 3.1.2 Áiseanna teagaisc sna bunscoileanna

Tá téacsleabhair Ghaeilge in úsáid i mbeagán os cionn aon trian de na seisiúin ranga sna bunscoileanna i gCatagóir A agus i gCatagóir B. I gcás na mbunscoileanna i gCatagóir C tá téacsleabhair Ghaeilge in úsáid acu i dtimpeall 12% de na seisiúin ranga agus tá siad ag úsáid téacsleabhair Ghaeilge don cheathrú cuid de na seisiúin ranga staire agus matamaitice.

Tá sciar suntasach de na bunscoileanna nach bhfuil ag úsáid na dtéacsleabhair Gaeilge atá ar fáil do na hábhair éagsúla, in ainneoin iad a bheith ag teagasc trí Ghaeilge. Sa chás seo úsáideann siad téacsleabhair Bhéarla nó meascán de théacsanna Béarla agus Gaeilge, ach tá fianaise ann freisin go bhfuil níos mó úsáide á baint as scéimeanna scoile, nótaí múinteoirí, fótachóipeanna agus modhanna teagaisc nach bhfuil ag brath ar théacs sna seisiúin ranga ina bhfuil an Ghaeilge in úsáid mar mheán teagaisc ná mar atá sna seisiúin ranga eile.

### 3.1.3 An teanga teagaisc sna bunscoileanna

Tá an teagasc á dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge i bhformhór na ranganna sna bunscoileanna i gCatagóir A. Tá sé seo fíor freisin i gcás na mbunscoileanna i gCatagóir B, ach go bhfuil meascán níos mó de Bhéarla agus de Ghaeilge in úsáid sna scoileanna seo agus go bhfuil roinnt bheag den teagasc á dhéanamh trí Bhéarla den chuid is mó.

A significant percentage (26%) of pupils currently attending Gaeltacht primary schools were born or lived outside the Gaeltacht prior to their attending school in the Gaeltacht. In addition, 9% of the pupils attending 33 schools in the Gaeltacht currently live outside the officially designated Gaeltacht.

### 3.1.1 Primary Pupils' Competence in Irish

#### Category A Primary Schools

54% of pupils in junior infants classes in these schools are fluent, or have a good level of competence in Irish. This percentage shows a continuous increase as pupils move from junior infants to 6th class, in which 87% of pupils are fluent, or have a good level of competence in Irish. Overall, it is evident that those pupils who are fluent in Irish make up the largest group in these schools and that the higher the class the greater the percentage of pupils in the higher competency group.

#### Category B Primary Schools

24% of pupils in junior infants classes in these schools are fluent, or have a good level of competence in Irish. This figure shows a consistent increase to 81% in 5th class and then falls marginally to 79% in 6th class. Those pupils who have a good level of competence in Irish comprise the largest group in these schools. Although the number of pupils who have only a little or have no Irish attending these schools decreases as they progress to the higher classes, overall they remain a significant percentage of the pupils, even in the higher classes.

#### Category C Primary Schools

Category C comprises the largest group of primary schools with 69 schools. A total of 4,544 pupils attend these schools, which represents 56% of Gaeltacht primary school pupils. Pupils with only a little or who have no Irish are the largest group in the lower classes in these schools. However the schools succeed in assisting a large proportion of these pupils to acquire a reasonable or good level of competence in Irish as they progress to the higher classes. Overall, pupils in these schools may be divided into three groups. Circa one third of the pupils have a good level of competence, with some being fluent, in Irish as they begin school or they attain such a level of competency during their school years. Circa one third have a reasonable level of competence in Irish as they begin school or they attain such a competency during their school years. The final third comprise pupils in the lower classes who have just started school with little or no Irish and those in the higher classes who fail to increase their level of competency in Irish during their school years.

### 3.1.2 Teaching Resources in Gaeltacht primary schools

Irish language textbooks are used in just over one third of class sessions in the primary schools in Category A and Category B. In the case of primary schools in Category C, Irish language textbooks are used in circa 12% of class sessions overall, and are used in one quarter of the history and mathematics class sessions.

A significant number of Gaeltacht primary schools that teach through Irish do not use the Irish language textbooks available for some subjects. In some cases a combination of English language and Irish language texts are used but in other cases the English language texts available are given preference. This research also suggests that there is a greater tendency towards making use of school based material, teacher notes, photocopies and non text-based teaching methods in Irish-medium class sessions than in the English-medium class sessions.

### 3.1.3 The language of instruction in primary schools

Teaching is through the medium of Irish in the majority of classes in Category A primary schools. This also holds true for Category B primary schools. Nonetheless, proportionally more use is made of English in Category B schools and a small number of classes are taught primarily through the medium of English.

Sna bunscoileanna i gCatagóir C, tá an teagasc á dhéanamh trí Bhéarla amháin nó trí Bhéarla den chuid is mó i dtimpeall leath de na ranganna agus is beag athrú a thagann air seo de réir mar a bhogann na daltaí ar aghaidh tríd na ranganna. Sa leath eile de na ranganna ina bhfuil Gaeilge amháin nó níos mó Gaeilge ná Béarla in úsáid, méadaíonn an úsáid a bhaintear as an nGaeilge mar mheán teagaisc de réir mar a bhogann na daltaí ó naíonáin bheaga go rang 6. Seasann an reiligiún amach sna bunscoileanna seo mar an t-ábhar is mó atá á theagasc trí Bhéarla.

Is léir ó Thábla 2C, áfach, gur difríochtaí sna polasaithe teanga atá á leanúint ag bunscoileanna éagsúla, seachas difríochtaí sna cleachtais atá in úsáid d'ábhair agus do ranganna éagsúla laistigh de scoileanna, is mó is cúis leis na patrúin seo i gcás Chatagóir C. Eadhon, tá 14 scoil i gCatagóir C a bhfuil idir 71%-100% den teagasc á dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge amháin nó trí Ghaeilge den chuid is mó acu, agus tá 25 scoil ina bhfuil idir 71%-100% den teagasc á dhéanamh trí Bhéarla den chuid is mó acu.

**TÁBLA 2a:**

AN CÉATADÁN  
ÚSÁIDE A  
BHAINTEAR AS NA  
CLEACHTAIS  
TEANGA ÉAGSÚLA I  
MBUNSCOILEANNA  
CHATAGÓIR A  
(n= 37))

Na cleachtais teanga / Céatadán	Gaeilge amháin nó Gaeilge den chuid is mó	Meascán de Ghaeilge agus Béarla, ach níos mó Gaeilge ná Béarla	Meascán de Bhéarla agus Gaeilge, ach níos mó Béarla na Gaeilge, nó Béarla den chuid is mó, nó Béarla amháin
0	0	16	33
1 - 10%	0	9	4
11 - 20%	0	4	0
21 - 30%	0	3	0
31 - 40%	1	2	0
41 - 50%	0	2	0
51 - 60%	2	1	0
61 - 70%	3	0	0
71 - 80%	2	0	0
81 - 90%	10	0	0
91 - 100%	19	0	0

**TÁBLA 2b:**

AN CÉATADÁN  
ÚSÁIDE A  
BHAINTEAR AS NA  
CLEACHTAIS  
TEANGA ÉAGSÚLA I  
MBUNSCOILEANNA  
CHATAGÓIR B  
(n= 20)

Na cleachtais teanga / Céatadán	Gaeilge amháin nó Gaeilge den chuid is mó	Meascán de Ghaeilge agus Béarla, ach níos mó Gaeilge ná Béarla	Meascán de Bhéarla agus Gaeilge, ach níos mó Béarla na Gaeilge, nó Béarla den chuid is mó, nó Béarla amháin
0	0	6	11
1 - 10%	1	4	3
11 - 20%	1	4	2
21 - 30%	1	0	2
31 - 40%	1	2	2
41 - 50%	1	0	0
51 - 60%	0	4	0
61 - 70%	1	0	0
71 - 80%	2	0	0
81 - 90%	4	0	0
91 - 100%	8	0	0

In Category C primary schools, instruction is through the medium of English only or primarily through the medium of English in circa half of all classes and this pattern remains relatively unchanged as pupils move from junior infants to 6th class. In the classes in which instruction is through the medium of Irish only or where more Irish than English is used, the use of Irish as the medium of instruction increases as pupils progress from infant classes to 6th class. Religion is notable as the subject most frequently being taught through the medium of English in these schools.

It is evident from Table 2C, however, that the main reason for the trends noted in relation to the medium of instruction in Category C primary schools, relates to differences in the language policies being implemented by individual schools as opposed to differences within schools relating to the teaching of different subjects and classes. Specifically, there are 14 schools in Category C in which 71%-100% of the teaching is done through the medium of Irish only or primarily through the medium of Irish, and there are 25 schools in which 71%-100% of instruction is primarily through the medium of English.

**TABLE 2a:**  
PERCENTAGE USAGE  
OF IRISH AND  
ENGLISH AS  
LANGUAGE OF  
INSTRUCTION IN  
CATEGORY A  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
(n= 37)

Language of instruction/ Percentage	Irish only or primarily through Irish	Mixture of Irish and English, but with more Irish than English	Mixture of English and Irish, but with more English than Irish, or primarily through English or English only
0	0	16	33
1 - 10%	0	9	4
11 -20%	0	4	0
21 - 30%	0	3	0
31 -40%	1	2	0
41 - 50%	0	2	0
51 - 60%	2	1	0
61 - 70%	3	0	0
71 - 80%	2	0	0
81 - 90%	10	0	0
91 - 100%	19	0	0

**TABLE 2b:**  
PERCENTAGE USAGE  
OF IRISH AND  
ENGLISH AS  
LANGUAGE OF  
INSTRUCTION IN  
CATEGORY B  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
(n= 20)

Language of instruction/ Percentage	Irish only or primarily through Irish	Mixture of Irish and English, but with more Irish than English	Mixture of English and Irish, but with more English than Irish, or primarily through English or English only
0	0	6	11
1 - 10%	1	4	3
11 -20%	1	4	2
21 - 30%	1	0	2
31 -40%	1	2	2
41 - 50%	1	0	0
51 - 60%	0	4	0
61 - 70%	1	0	0
71 - 80%	2	0	0
81 - 90%	4	0	0
91 - 100%	8	0	0

**TÁBLA 2c:**  
AN CÉATADÁN  
ÚSÁIDE A  
BHAINTEAR AS NA  
CLEACHTAIS  
TEANGA ÉAGSÚLA I  
MBUNSCOILEANNA  
CHATAGÓIR C  
(n= 66)

Na cleachtais teanga / Céatadán	Gaeilge amháin nó Gaeilge den chuid is mó	Meascán de Ghaeilge agus Béarla, ach níos mó Gaeilge ná Béarla	Meascán de Bhéarla agus Gaeilge, ach níos mó Béarla na Gaeilge, nó Béarla den chuid is mó, nó Béarla amháin
0	25	19	13
1 - 10%	8	13	7
11 - 20%	5	9	6
21 - 30%	4	7	2
31 - 40%	2	8	3
41 - 50%	1	3	3
51 - 60%	4	1	4
61 - 70%	3	0	3
71 - 80%	1	5	2
81 - 90%	7	0	3
91 - 100%	6	1	20

### 3.2 Iar-bhunskoileanna na Gaeltachta

Ar an iomlán, is léir go bhfuil cuid mhaith de na dúshláin chéanna le sárú ag na scoileanna dara leibhéal sa Ghaeltacht agus atá ag na scoileanna bunleibhéil. Thit líon na ndaltaí iar-bhunskoile 10% idir 1998 agus 2003. Tá sé seo beagán níos airde ná an titim 7% i líon na ndaltaí bunskoile sa tréimhse chéanna.

Rugadh nó tógadh 23% de dhaltaí iar-bhunskoile na Gaeltachta lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht. Is 5% acu a rugadh/tógadh thar lear. Tá an céatadán seo níos ísle ná an céatadán céanna ag an mbunleibhéal. Is 26% de na daltaí bunskoile a rugadh nó a tógadh lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht agus rugadh/tógadh 11% acu lasmuigh den tír. Is cosúil mar sin, gur ag dul i méid a bheidh an brú ar an nGaeilge sna hiar-bhunskoileanna sna blianta amach anseo. Is é a mhalairt atá fíor i gcás áit chónaithe na ndaltaí. I gcás na mbunskoileanna tá 91% de na daltaí ina gcónaí laistigh den limistéar Gaeltachta, ach i gcás na n-iar-bhunskoileanna ní chónaíonn ach 82% de na daltaí laistigh den Ghaeltacht.

Thuiriscigh dhá thrian de na hiar-bhunskoileanna Gaeltachta go mbíonn deacrachtaí acu múinteoirí a aimsiú. Mar a bhí i gcás na mbunskoileanna, bhí sciar suntasach de na poist a fógraíodh sna hiar-bhunskoileanna le trí bliana anuas nár líonadh ar an gcéad iarracht agus, ar an iomlán bhí líon na n-iarratas a fuarthas do na poist seo an-íseal. De bharr na ndeacrachtaí a bhíonn ag iar-bhunskoileanna múinteoirí atá ábalta teagasc trí Ghaeilge a fháil bíonn siad fágtha gan aon rogha go minic, ach múinteoirí gan Ghaeilge a fhostú.

#### 3.2.1 Cumas Gaeilge na nDaltaí sna hIar-bhunskoileanna

##### Iar-bhunskoileanna Chatagóir A

Tosaíonn 95% de na daltaí i mBliain 1 in iar-bhunskoileanna Chatagóir A agus Gaeilge líofa nó Gaeilge mhaith acu. Téann an figiúr seo suas agus síos ó Bhliain 1 suas go dtí Bliain 6, áit a bhfuil an céatadán ag a bhfuil Gaeilge líofa nó Gaeilge mhaith ag 92%. Is iad na daltaí ag a bhfuil Gaeilge líofa an grúpa is líonmhaire sna hiar-bhunskoileanna seo.

##### Iar-bhunskoileanna Catagóir B

Thuiriscigh na príomhoidí Gaeilge líofa nó Gaeilge mhaith a bheith ag 71% de dhaltaí Bhliain 1 in iar-bhunskoileanna Chatagóir B. Arís, cosúil leis na hiar-bhunskoileanna i gCatagóir A ardaíonn agus íslíonn an céatadán seo sna blianta ó Bhliain 1 go Bliain 6, sa tslí go gcríochnaítear leis an gcéatadán céanna, eadhon, 71%, i mBliain 6. Tosaíonn a thrí oiread daltaí i mBliain 1 sna hiar-bhunskoileanna i gCatagóir B ar bheagán Gaeilge nó gan aon Ghaeilge i gcomparáid leis na hiar-bhunskoileanna i gCatagóir A (13% i gCatagóir B, 4% i gCatagóir A). Ar an iomlán, críochnaíonn beagnach an líon céanna, eadhon 12%, i mBliain 6 ar bheagán Gaeilge nó gan aon Ghaeilge agus a thosaigh i mBliain 1.



**TABLE 2c:**  
PERCENTAGE USAGE  
OF IRISH AND  
ENGLISH AS  
LANGUAGE OF  
INSTRUCTION IN  
CATEGORY C  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
(n= 66)

Language of instruction/ Percentage	Irish only or primarily through Irish	Mixture of Irish and English, but with more Irish than English	Mixture of English and Irish, but with more English than Irish, or primarily through English or English only
0	25	19	13
1 - 10%	8	13	7
11 - 20%	5	9	6
21 - 30%	4	7	2
31 - 40%	2	8	3
41 - 50%	1	3	3
51 - 60%	4	1	4
61 - 70%	3	0	3
71 - 80%	1	5	2
81 - 90%	7	0	3
91 - 100%	6	1	20

### 3.2 Gaeltacht Post-primary schools

It is clear that most of the challenges facing second level Gaeltacht schools are similar to those facing Gaeltacht primary schools. The number of post-primary school pupils fell by 10% between 1998 and 2003. This decrease is greater than the 7% fall experienced by primary schools over the same period.

23% of Gaeltacht post-primary school pupils were born or lived outside the Gaeltacht at some stage before attending school in the Gaeltacht; and 5% were born or lived outside Ireland. This percentage is lower than the equivalent figures for primary level pupils, of which 26% were born or lived outside the Gaeltacht and 11% were born or lived outside Ireland. It would appear, therefore, that the language pressures being currently experienced in post-primary schools are likely to increase over the coming years. The number of pupils attending Gaeltacht schools and living outside the officially designated Gaeltacht is greater at post-primary level. As regards primary schools, 91% of pupils live within the Gaeltacht, whereas in the case of post-primary schools only 82% of pupils live within the Gaeltacht.

Two thirds of Gaeltacht post-primary schools reported difficulties in recruiting teachers. As was the case in primary schools, a significant number of posts advertised in Gaeltacht post-primary schools within the last three years were not filled on the first attempt, and, overall, the number of applications received for these posts was very low. As a result of the difficulties post-primary schools face in recruiting teachers who can teach through the medium of Irish, they are often left with no option but to employ teachers who do not possess the relevant competency in Irish.

#### 3.2.1 Post-Primary Pupils' Competence in Irish

##### Category A Post-Primary Schools

95% of first year pupils in Category A post-primary schools are fluent or have a good level of competence in Irish as they begin their post-primary education. This figure fluctuates between 1st year and 6th year, at which stage 92% are fluent or have a good level of competency in Irish. Those pupils who are fluent in Irish make up the largest group in these post-primary schools.

##### Category B Post-Primary Schools

Principals reported that 71% of 1st year post-primary school pupils in Category B schools were fluent or had a good level of competence in Irish. As in the case of the Category A schools, this percentage fluctuates slightly between 1st year and 6th year, at which stage 71% are again considered fluent or have a good level of competency in Irish. Three times as many pupils begin 1st year in Category B post-primary schools with little or no competency in Irish as do in Category A post-primary schools (13% in Category B, 4% in Category A). Overall, a similar percentage, 12%, of pupils with little or no Irish is recorded in 6th Year as is recorded in 1st Year in these schools.

### Iar-bhunscoileanna Catagóir C

Is i gCatagóir C arís, mar a bhí i gcás na mbunscoileanna, atá an líon is mó iar-bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta (11 scoil nó 41% acu). Is 2,093 dalta ó 1,604 teaghlach atá ag freastal ar na hiar-bhunscoileanna seo. Is é seo 43% de dhaltáí iar-bhunscoile na Gaeltachta. Tá Gaeilge líofa nó Gaeilge mhaith ag 46% de dhaltáí Bhliain 1 sna hiar-bhunscoileanna seo. Ardaíonn an céatadán seo go leanúnach chomh fada leis an Idirbhliain (71%), ach tagann íslíú mór air idir an Idirbhliain agus Bliain 5 (ó 71% go dtí 54%). Ardaíonn sé go 60% arís i mBliain 6. Fágann sé seo go bhfuil Gaeilge líofa nó Gaeilge mhaith ag 54% de na daltaí sna hiar-bhunscoileanna i gCatagóir C.

### 3.2.2 Áiseanna Teagaisc sna hIar-bhunscoileanna

Ag leibhéal an Teastais Shóisearaigh is don Mhatamaitic is mó atá téacs Gaeilge in úsáid. Úsáidtear téacs Gaeilge amháin mar phríomhábair teagaisc i 62% de na seisiúin ranga don ábhar seo. Is iad na hábhair eile is coitianta a bhfuil téacsanna Gaeilge in úsáid chun iad a theagasc ná na Teicneolaíochtaí Ábhar (Míotal agus Adhmad), agus an Tíreolaíocht, ina bhfuil téacsanna Gaeilge in úsáid in idir 40%-45% de na seisiúin ranga a bhaineann leo. Tá a laghad sin áiseanna teagaisc oiriúnacha ar fáil do na hábhair Ardteistiméireachta gur beag atá le rá faoi. Is í an Mhatamaitic, a bhfuil úsáid á baint as téacs Gaeilge i 59% de na seisiúin ranga, an t-aon ábhar go bhféadfaí a rá fúithi go bhfuil téacsleabhar Gaeilge in úsáid go coitianta in iar-bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta chun í a theagasc ag leibhéal na hArdteistiméireachta.

Mar an gcéanna leis an mbunleibhéal, is léir nach é an easpa soláthair amháin, atá ag cur bac ar scoileanna Gaeltachta téacsanna Gaeilge a úsáid. Tá iar-bhunscoileanna agus múinteoirí ann nach bhfuil ábalta nó sásta na háiseanna teagaisc atá ar fáil i nGaeilge a úsáid. Sa phlé a bhí againn leis na príomhoidí luadh gur deacracht ar leith an easpa téacsleabhar atá ann, ach luadh freisin go mbíonn deacrachtaí leanúnacha leis na téacsleabhair a bhíonn ar fáil ar a n-áirítear an Ghaeilge a bhíonn iontu a bheith ró-dheacair, gan iad a bheith cothrom le dáta, gan iad a bheith sách tarraingteach, agus iad a bheith ró-mhall ag teacht ar an margadh. Ní léir go míníonn na deacrachtaí seo gach cás, áfach, sa mhéid agus go bhfuil téacsleabhair Ghaeilge áirithe ann atá in úsáid i mbreis agus leath de na seisiúin ranga don ábhar lena mbaineann siad, agus fós nach bhfuil siad in úsáid ag cuid de na hiar-bhunscoileanna, a mhaíonn go bhfuil siad ag teagasc an ábhair sin trí Ghaeilge. Is cúis iontais é seo, go háirithe i bhfianaise gur beag ábhar léitheoireachta eile atá ar fáil i nGaeilge d'fhormhór na n-ábhar atá i gceist.

### 3.2.3 An Teanga Teagaisc sna hIar-bhunscoileanna

Is léir géarchéim a bheith ag an teagasc trí Ghaeilge in iar-bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta. Tá an Béarla in uachtar mar mheán teagaisc i 40% de na seisiúin ranga i mbliain na hArdteistiméireachta. Tá 8 scoil (2 scoil i gCatagóir B agus 6 scoil i gCatagóir C) atá ag teagasc trí Bhéarla amháin nó trí Bhéarla den chuid is mó. Fiú sna hiar-bhunscoileanna atá lonnaithe i gceantair láidre Ghaeltachta (Catagóir A), tá os cionn 10% den teagasc á dhéanamh trí Bhéarla i gcuid de na hábhair thraidisiúnta. Sna hiar-bhunscoileanna i gCatagóir B, níl ach leath de na seisiúin ranga á dteagasc trí Ghaeilge ag leibhéal an Teastais Shóisearaigh, agus titeann sé seo go dtí circa aon trian de na seisiúin ranga ag leibhéal na hArdteistiméireachta.

### Category C Post-Primary Schools

As in the case of the primary sector, Category C post-primary schools make up the greatest number of Gaeltacht post-primary schools (11 schools or 41%). A total of 2,093 pupils from 1,604 families attend these post-primary schools. This equates to 43% of Gaeltacht post-primary school pupils. 46% of 1st Year pupils in these post-primary schools are fluent or have a good level of competence in Irish. This percentage increases consistently until Transition Year (71%), but decreases thereafter to 60% in 6th year. Overall 54% of Category C post-primary school pupils are fluent, or have a good level of competence, in Irish.

#### 3.2.2 Teaching aids in Post-primary schools

At Junior Certificate level, Mathematics represents the greatest usage of Irish language texts. An Irish only text represents the primary teaching resource in 62% of class sessions for this subject. The other subjects for which Irish language texts are in regular use are Materials Technology (Metal and Wood), and Geography, in which Irish language texts are used in 40% to 45% of class sessions. The availability of Irish-medium teaching resources for Leaving Certificate subjects is so limited that there is little to report on the matter. The only Leaving Certificate subject of which it can be said that the use of Irish language texts is commonplace (59% of class sessions) in its teaching in Gaeltacht post-primary schools is Mathematics.

As is the case in primary level schools, it is evident that the limited supply of Irish-medium textbooks is not the only factor that prevents Gaeltacht schools from using Irish language texts. There are post-primary schools and teachers who are unable or unwilling to use the teaching resources that are available in Irish. In our discussions with principals the lack of textbooks was cited as a particular difficulty, but cited also were the continuous difficulties being experienced with the textbooks which are available, including the Irish contained therein being too difficult, material being out of date, their design not being sufficiently appealing, and the delay in their publication. These difficulties do not fully explain schools' non-use of Irish-medium texts in all cases, however. There are some Irish language textbooks being used in over half of class sessions to which they pertain, yet they are not being used in the remaining post-primary schools, which purport to teach the subject through the medium of Irish. This is a matter of concern, especially as there is very little other reading material available in Irish for most of these subject areas.

#### 3.2.3 The language of instruction in post-primary schools

It is evident that teaching through the medium of Irish in Gaeltacht post-primary schools is in a state of crisis. The English language is the preferred medium of instruction in 40% of Leaving Certificate class sessions. Of the schools participating in this research, 8 schools (2 schools in Category B and 6 schools in Category C) are teaching through English only or primarily through the medium of English. Even in post-primary schools located in strong Gaeltacht areas (Category A), over 10% of the teaching is through the medium of English in some of the traditional subjects. With regard to post-primary schools in Category C, only half of class sessions are conducted through the medium of Irish at Junior Certificate level, and this figure falls to circa one third of class sessions at Leaving Certificate level.

**TÁBLA 3a:**  
AN CÉATADÁN  
ÚSÁIDE A  
BHAINTEAR AS NA  
CLEACHTAIS  
TEANGA ÉAGSÚLA  
IN IAR-  
BHUNSCOILEANNA  
CHATAGÓIR A  
(n= 9)

Na cleachtais teanga / Céatadán	Gaeilge amháin nó Gaeilge den chuid is mó	Meascán de Ghaeilge agus Béarla, ach níos mó Gaeilge ná Béarla	Meascán de Bhéarla agus Gaeilge, ach níos mó Béarla ná Gaeilge, nó Béarla den chuid is mó, nó Béarla amháin
0	0	7	6
1 - 10%	0	2	2
11 -20%	0	0	0
21 - 30%	0	0	0
31 -40%	0	0	1
41 - 50%	1	0	0
51 - 60%	0	0	0
61 - 70%	0	0	0
71 - 80%	0	0	0
81 - 90%	0	0	0
91 - 100%	8	0	0

**TÁBLA 3b:**  
AN CÉATADÁN  
ÚSÁIDE A  
BHAINTEAR AS NA  
CLEACHTAIS  
TEANGA ÉAGSÚLA  
IN IAR-  
BHUNSCOILEANNA  
CHATAGÓIR B  
(n= 7)

Na cleachtais teanga / Céatadán	Gaeilge amháin nó Gaeilge den chuid is mó	Meascán de Ghaeilge agus Béarla, ach níos mó Gaeilge ná Béarla	Meascán de Bhéarla agus Gaeilge, ach níos mó Béarla ná Gaeilge, nó Béarla den chuid is mó, nó Béarla amháin
0	2	3	2
1 - 10%	0	0	1
11 -20%	1	1	1
21 - 30%	1	2	0
31 -40%	0	0	0
41 - 50%	0	1	1
51 - 60%	0	0	0
61 - 70%	1	0	0
71 - 80%	1	0	0
81 - 90%	0	0	0
91 - 100%	1	0	2

**TÁBLA 3c:**  
AN CÉATADÁN  
ÚSÁIDE A  
BHAINTEAR AS NA  
CLEACHTAIS  
TEANGA ÉAGSÚLA  
IN IAR-  
BHUNSCOILEANNA  
CHATAGÓIR C  
(n= 11)

Na cleachtais teanga / Céatadán	Gaeilge amháin nó Gaeilge den chuid is mó	Meascán de Ghaeilge agus Béarla, ach níos mó Gaeilge ná Béarla	Meascán de Bhéarla agus Gaeilge, ach níos mó Béarla ná Gaeilge, nó Béarla den chuid is mó, nó Béarla amháin
0	4	6	2
1 - 10%	2	1	2
11 -20%	1	1	0
21 - 30%	1	0	0
31 -40%	1	1	0
41 - 50%	0	0	1
51 - 60%	0	0	0
61 - 70%	0	2	0
71 - 80%	0	0	0
81 - 90%	0	0	1
91 - 100%	2	0	5

**TABLE 3a:**  
PERCENTAGE USAGE  
OF IRISH AND  
ENGLISH AS  
LANGUAGE OF  
INSTRUCTION IN  
CATEGORY A POST-  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
(n= 9)

Language of instruction/ Percentage	Irish only or primarily through Irish	Mixture of Irish and English, but with more Irish than English	Mixture of English and Irish, but with more English than Irish, or primarily through English or English only
0	0	7	6
1 - 10%	0	2	2
11 -20%	0	0	0
21 - 30%	0	0	0
31 -40%	0	0	1
41 - 50%	1	0	0
51 - 60%	0	0	0
61 - 70%	0	0	0
71 - 80%	0	0	0
81 - 90%	0	0	0
91 - 100%	8	0	0

**TABLE 3b:**  
PERCENTAGE USAGE  
OF IRISH AND  
ENGLISH AS  
LANGUAGE OF  
INSTRUCTION IN  
CATEGORY B POST-  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
(n= 7))

Language of instruction/ Percentage	Irish only or primarily through Irish	Mixture of Irish and English, but with more Irish than English	Mixture of English and Irish, but with more English than Irish, or primarily through English or English only
0	2	3	2
1 - 10%	0	0	1
11 -20%	1	1	1
21 - 30%	1	2	0
31 -40%	0	0	0
41 - 50%	0	1	1
51 - 60%	0	0	0
61 - 70%	1	0	0
71 - 80%	1	0	0
81 - 90%	0	0	0
91 - 100%	1	0	2

**TABLE 3c:**  
PERCENTAGE USAGE  
OF IRISH AND  
ENGLISH AS  
LANGUAGE OF  
INSTRUCTION IN  
CATEGORY C POST-  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
(n= 11)

Language of instruction/ Percentage	Irish only or primarily through Irish	Mixture of Irish and English, but with more Irish than English	Mixture of English and Irish, but with more English than Irish, or primarily through English or English only
0	4	6	2
1 - 10%	2	1	2
11 -20%	1	1	0
21 - 30%	1	0	0
31 -40%	1	1	0
41 - 50%	0	0	1
51 - 60%	0	0	0
61 - 70%	0	2	0
71 - 80%	0	0	0
81 - 90%	0	0	1
91 - 100%	2	0	5

## 4. TÁTAL AGUS MOLTAÍ

De réir an Achta Oideachais, 1998, tá cuspóirí oideachais agus cuspóirí teanga ag an gcóras oideachais sa Ghaeltacht. Baineann na cuspóirí oideachais le cearta leanaí i réimse an oideachais, agus, go háirithe, an aidhm go gcuirfear ar fáil do dhaoine a bhfuil cónaí orthu sa Stát leibhéal agus cáilíocht oideachais cuí chun freastal ar a riachtanais agus a gcumas (Mír 6(a) agus 6 (b) den Acht Oideachais, 1998). Is iad na cuspóirí teanga atá leagtha síos faoi mhír 6(j) den Acht ná ‘cuidiú leis an nGaeilge a choinneáil mar phríomhtheanga an phobail i limistéir Ghaeltachta.’ Tá sé tábhachtach a mheabhú go mbaineann na cuspóirí seo leis an gcóras oideachais i gcoitinne agus ní leis na scoileanna amháin.

Léiríonn an taighde seo go bhfuil ag éirí leis na scoileanna Gaeltachta cuid de na cuspóirí seo a bhaint amach go héifeachtach. I gcás chumas na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge, mar shampla, is léir go n-éiríonn leis na scoileanna cumas Gaeilge na ndaltaí a threisiú agus iad ag dul tríd an gcóras oideachais ó rang na naíonán beag sa bhunscoil go dtí leibhéal na hArdteistiméireachta. Is féidir a rá, mar sin, go mbeadh an Ghaeilge sa Ghaeltacht i bhfad níos laige ná mar atá gan an obair atá á déanamh sna bunscoileanna agus sna hiarbhunscoileanna. Is léir freisin, go bhfuil an obair seo á déanamh sna scoileanna gan an tacaíocht chúí a bheith curtha ar fáil.

Is léir freisin nach bhfuil ag éirí leis na scoileanna na cuspóirí thuas a bhaint amach i ngach cás, chomh fada agus a bhaineann siad leis an nGaeilge. Dar leis na scoileanna féin, fágann an ceathrú cuid de na daltaí na bunscoileanna agus gan acu ach Gaeilge mheasartha agus fágann circa an deichiú cuid eile agus iad ar bheagán Gaeilge nó gan aon Ghaeilge. Ag leibhéal na hArdteistiméireachta tá 18% de na daltaí nach bhfuil ach Gaeilge mheasartha acu agus tá 10% eile ann atá ar bheagán Gaeilge nó gan aon Ghaeilge. Ina theannta sin, tá an Béarla in uachtar mar ghnáth-theanga chaidrimh i measc na ndaltaí i bhformhór scoileanna na Gaeltachta. Ar ndóigh, cuimsíonn na figiúirí seo scoileanna atá suite i gceantair Ghaeltachta ina bhfuil labhairt na Gaeilge imithe i léig agus roinnt scoileanna nach bhfuil ag teagasc trí Ghaeilge a thuilleadh. Ach fiú sna ceantair is láidre Gaeltachta tá 14% de na daltaí i rang 6 sa bhunscoil atá gan Gaeilge líofa nó Gaeilge mhaith a bheith acu, agus tá 7% de na daltaí i mbliain na hArdteistiméireachta sa riocht céanna. Ina theannta sin, tá an Béarla in uachtar mar ghnáth-theanga chaidrimh na ndaltaí i bhformhór na scoileanna iar-bhunoideachais atá suite sna ceantair seo. Tá an chosúlacht ar an scéal mar sin, gur fearr atá ag éirí leis an gcóras oideachais sa Ghaeltacht úsáid an Bhéarla a chothú i measc cainteoirí dúchais Gaeilge ná mar atá ag éirí leis úsáid na Gaeilge a chothú i measc cainteoirí Béarla.

Níl fáil ag na scoileanna ar sholáthar sásúil áiseanna teagaisc ag an mbunleibhéal ná ag an dara leibhéal, go háirithe ag leibhéal na hArdteistiméireachta agus níl an soláthar teoranta d’áiseanna teagaisc atá ar fáil sásúil do riachtanais na scoileanna, i ngach cás. Tá deacrachtaí ag na scoileanna múinteoirí a mhealladh le cur isteach ar phostanna atá á dtairiscint acu, agus bíonn deacrachtaí faoi leith acu teacht ar mhúinteoirí atá toilteanach agus ábalta teagasc go héifeachtach trí mheán na Gaeilge. Fágтар iad gan aon rogha go minic, ach a bheith i dtuilleamaí múinteoirí nach bhfuil ar a gcumas ach teagasc trí Bhéarla amháin.

Is scoileanna beaga iad formhór bhunscoileanna na Gaeltachta. Tá céatadán suntasach acu i mbaol a ndúnta as seo go ceann roinnt blianta. An chuid nach bhfuil i mbaol a ndúnta tá a bhformhór ag streachailt de bharr nach bhfuil acu ach líon beag daltaí agus múinteoirí. Tá siad faoi mhíbhuntáiste ó thaobh áiseanna de, tá deacrachtaí faoi leith acu múinteoirí a mhealladh agus tá deacrachtaí acu an curaclam bunscoile a sholáthar ina iomláine. Ní léir conas gur féidir freastal éifeachtach a dhéanamh ar riachtanais oideachais daltaí Gaeltachta ag úsáid an múnla oideachais seo.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Under the provision of the Education Act, 1998, the education system in the Gaeltacht has both educational and language planning objectives. The educational objectives pertain to the constitutional rights of children, and in particular the aim that everybody living in the State shall be provided with a level and quality of education appropriate to their needs and abilities (Section 6(a) and 6 (b) Education Act, 1998). The language planning objectives contained in the Act are set out in section 6(j) and state that every person concerned in the implementation of the Act shall have regard to the objective of contributing 'to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language in Gaeltacht areas.' It is important to note, therefore, that this objective applies to the education system in general and is not limited to schools.

This research project confirms that Gaeltacht schools are achieving some of these objectives in an effective manner. In relation to the Irish language ability of students, for example, it is clear that pupils' levels of ability in the language increase during their school years as they progress from junior infants to Leaving Certificate. We can categorically state therefore that the Irish language would be in a much weaker position in the Gaeltacht if it were not for the work done by primary and second level schools. It is also clear that the schools are working without an adequate support framework.

It is also clear that schools are not achieving all of the above language related objectives in every case. They report that a quarter of pupils leave Gaeltacht primary schools with only a reasonable level of Irish and that approximately 10% of pupils leave primary schools with little or no Irish. At Leaving Certificate level 18% of pupils have only a reasonable level of Irish and 10% of the pupils have little or no Irish. In addition to this, English is the main language used by pupils in normal conversational interactions in the vast majority of Gaeltacht schools. Of course these statistics include schools that are in Gaeltacht areas where Irish is no longer a spoken language and include some schools that no longer teach through the medium of Irish. However, our figures also show that in Gaeltacht areas where Irish is still the main spoken language 14% of 6th class primary level students and 7% of Leaving Certificate students are not regarded as having fluent or good Irish. English is the main language used by pupils in normal conversational interactions in the vast majority of these schools also. It would appear, therefore, that the education system in the Gaeltacht is better equipped to inculcate the use of English amongst its first language speakers of Irish than it is to inculcate the use of Irish amongst its first language speakers of English.

Gaeltacht schools do not have access to an adequate provision of Irish-medium teaching resources at either primary or second level. This is particularly so in the case of the Leaving Certificate subjects. In addition, the limited provision that does exist is not suitable in all cases. Schools also find it is very difficult to attract a sufficient number of applications for teaching posts they advertise, and they face a particular difficulty in finding teachers who are willing and able to teach effectively through the medium of Irish. They often find themselves with no option except to employ teachers whose teaching capacity is limited to English.

The majority of primary schools in the Gaeltacht are small schools. A significant percentage of them are threatened with closure over the next few years if current trends continue. However, even schools not currently threatened with closure find that they are struggling with limited resources and facilities as a result of their low pupil numbers. They find it particularly difficult to recruit teachers and they cannot always deliver the primary school curriculum in its entirety. It is not apparent how the educational needs and requirements of Gaeltacht students can be met effectively using this model of education.

Níl fáil ag daltaí i scoileanna Gaeltachta ag an mbunleibhéal ná ag an dara leibhéal, ach go hannamh, ar sheirbhísí tacaíochta ó na boird sláinte ná ó na seirbhísí síceolaíochta trí mheán na Gaeilge.

Tá na deacrachtaí seo méadaithe go mór de bharr nach bhfuil éirithe leis na scoileanna féin polasaithe deimhneacha a fhorbairt ag leibhéal na scoile a thabharfadh treoir chinnte dá gcuid múinteoirí faoi conas déileáil leis na ceisteanna teanga agus oideachais a eascraíonn as na deacrachtaí seo ar fad. Ní léir ach oiread gur cuireadh aon tacaíocht, aon chomhairle ná aon acmhainní ar fáil do na scoileanna a chabhródh leo a leithéid de pholasaithe a fhorbairt.

Tá, mar a tuairiscítear thuas, roinnt mhaith scoileanna tar éis géilleadh do na deacrachtaí seo cheana féin agus iompú go huile agus go hiomlán ar an mBéarla mar mheán teagaisc agus riaracháin. Tá roinnt scoileanna eile atá idir dhá cheann na meá i láthair na huair. Fiú i measc na scoileanna atá suite sna ceantair is láidre Ghaeltachta is léir gurb é a ndúshlán ag an bpointe seo oideachas Gaeltachta den scoth a sholáthar go héifeachtach trí mheán na Gaeilge mar ba mhian leo. Mura dtiocfaidh athrú ar na cúinsí faoina bhfuil na scoileanna seo ag feidhmiú go luath agus murar féidir a dheimhniú go mbeidh na seirbhísí tacaíochta atá de dhíth orthu ar fáil dóibh trí mheán na Gaeilge ar bhealach éifeachtach, is deacair a shamhlú go mbeidh mórán scoileanna bunleibhéal ná dara leibhéal ag teagasc trí mheán na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht faoi cheann fiche bliain eile.

## 4.1 NA PRÍOMH-MHOLTAÍ

### 4.1.1 SAINIÚ AR ‘SCOILEANNA GAELTACHTA’

Moltar go ndéanfar athbhreithniú ar an sainiú atá againn ar ‘scoil Ghaeltachta’ agus go mbunófar an sainiú amach anseo ar an múnla oideachais atá in úsáid i scoileanna, ag cur san áireamh go bhfuil na roghanna seo a leanas ar fáil do scoileanna:

- Oideachas trí mheán na chéad teanga agus an Ghaeilge mar mheán.
- Córas tumoideachais agus an Ghaeilge mar mheán.
- Oideachas trí mheán na chéad teanga agus Béarla mar mheán.

Nuair atá an sainmhíniú nua agus na múnlaí oideachais atá inghlactha laistigh den sainmhíniú sin aontaithe, moltar:

- Gurb é an sainmhíniú sin a bheidh mar bhunús d’fhorbairt gach straitéise agus seirbhíse tacaíochta a bheidh á bhforbairt d’oideachas Gaeltachta sa seo amach.
- Go leagfar amach treoir, critéir agus slata tomhais soiléire a léireoidh na dea-chleachtais oideachais, teanga agus riaracháin a bhaineann leis na múnlaí oideachais thuas, agus go n-úsáidfear iad sin feasta mar bhunús do:
  - Measúnú a dhéanfar ar na scoileanna.
  - Réamhoiliúint agus oiliúint ionghairme múinteoirí a bheidh ag obair i scoileanna Gaeltachta.
  - Dearadh agus cur i bhfeidhm churaclam na bunscoile agus na hiar-bhunscoile sa Ghaeltacht.
  - An bealach ina ndéantar seachadadh ar sheirbhísí tacaíochta oideachais i scoileanna Gaeltachta.



Pupils in Gaeltacht schools do not have access to Irish-medium support services from health boards or from psychological support services, except in a limited number of cases.

The consequences of these shortcomings and difficulties have been exacerbated in the absence of the development of clear school-level policies that would provide guidance for teachers dealing with the language planning and educational issues that arise in Gaeltacht schools. It would also appear that schools have not been given the support, advice and resources that would allow them to develop such policies.

As reported above, a significant number of Gaeltacht schools have already conceded defeat in the face of the difficulties and have switched to teaching through the medium of English. A number of other schools would appear to be wavering in their commitment to teaching through the medium of Irish. It is clear that the effective delivery through the medium of Irish of a high quality educational service appropriate to the Gaeltacht is now a challenging proposition even for schools situated in the stronger Gaeltacht areas. Unless the circumstances in which these schools are currently operating undergo a major change and unless they can be confident that the support services which they require will be available to them through the medium of Irish, it is likely that very few primary level or second level Gaeltacht schools will still be teaching through Irish in twenty years time.

## 4.1 SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1.1 TOWARDS A REDEFINITION OF ‘GAELTACHT SCHOOLS’

It is recommended that the current definition of Gaeltacht schools as schools that are located within the official boundaries of the Gaeltacht be reviewed with a view to providing a definition which is based on the educational model being used by schools, with the following options being available to schools:

- A first language education model with Irish as the medium of instruction.
- An immersion education model with Irish as the medium of instruction.
- A first language education model with English as the medium of instruction

Once a new definition and the educational models that are acceptable within it have been agreed it is recommended:

- That this definition shall be the basis for the development of every Gaeltacht education strategy and support service in the future.
- That clear and objective guidelines, criteria and benchmarks are developed to clarify what is the acceptable educational, language planning and administrative best practice within each of the above education models, and that these shall be used in the future as the basis for:
  - The evaluation of Gaeltacht schools.
  - The preservice and inservice training of teachers who teach in Gaeltacht schools.
  - The design and implementation of the primary and second level schools’ curriculum for the Gaeltacht.
  - The way in which educational support services are delivered in Gaeltacht schools.

#### 4.1.2 COMHTHÁTHÚ NA STRUCHTÚR TACAÍOCHTA OIDEACHAIS SA GHAELTACHT

Moltar go mbreathnófar feasta ar an nGaeltacht mar aonad oideachais faoi leith atá comhdhéanta de na scoileanna bunleibhéil agus dara leibhéal atá ag feidhmiú trí Ghaeilge sa Ghaeltacht agus na seirbhísí tacaíochta agus comhairleacha atá ag freastal orthu. Le feidhm a thabhairt don mholadh seo, moltar:

- Go mbunófar sain-chigireacht Ghaeltachta, eadhon, aonad ar leith den Chigireacht a bheidh ag feidhmiú trí mheán na Gaeilge, a chiuimseoidh cigirí bunleibhéil agus cigirí dara leibhéal agus ar a mbeidh an phríomhfhreagracht maidir le comhairle agus tacaíocht a chur ar scoileanna Gaeltachta maidir leis na dea-chleachtais a thacaíonn le múineadh trí mheán na Gaeilge agus trí mheán an dara teanga a threisiú. Moltar go mbeidh an t-aonad cigireachta seo ag feidhmiú faoi scáth na Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta chomh maith le bheith ag obair i gcomhar leis an gCigireacht agus ag tuairisciú di.
- Go mbunófar aonad ar leith de gach seirbhís eile atá ag cur tacaíocht ar fáil do scoileanna Gaeltachta agus go mbeidh na haonaid sin tiomanta do staidéar a dhéanamh ar riachtanais scoileanna Gaeltachta agus na seirbhísí cuí tacaíochta a sholáthar dóibh trí mheán na Gaeilge. Moltar freisin go mbeidh na haonaid seo ag feidhmiú faoi scáth na Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta, chomh maith le bheith ag tuairisciú agus ag obair i gcomhar leis an bpríomhsheirbhís lena mbaineann siad.
- Go mbunófar Ionad Réigiúnach de chuid na Comhairle i ngach mórcheantar Gaeltachta (le fo-ionaid i gceantair Ghaeltachta eile de réir mar is gá), as a mbeidh na seirbhísí seo agus an tSain-Chigireacht Ghaeltachta ag feidhmiú.
- I gcás cláir thacaíochta agus scéimeanna níos lú moltar go ndéanfar na cúraimí a bhaineann leo a tharmligean leis an gComhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta agus go mbunóidh an Chomhairle aonad ar leith le cúram a dhéanamh dá leithéid.

#### 4.1.3 LÍON AGUS MÉID NA MBUNSCOILEANNA SA GHAELTACHT

Moltar go dtabharfaidh an Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta i gcomhar le príomhoídí agus boird bhainistíochta na mbunscoileanna faoi phróiseas athbhreithnithe ar thodhchaí na scoileanna ag an leibhéal áitiúil. Agus an obair seo á déanamh is é an cuspóir ba chóir a bheith leis ná teacht ar réiteach atá go maith don phobal, atá go maith do na múinteoirí, agus, thar aon rud eile, a chuirfidh oideachas den scoth ar fáil trí mheán na Gaeilge do dhaltai Gaeltachta. Moltar go mbreathnófaí ar na roghanna ar leith atá molta ag Líonra Príomhoídí Bunscoile Éireann (2004) sa chomhthéacs seo, agus go háirithe ar an moladh atá déanta acu maidir le grúpaí scoileanna. Is gá a áireamh, áfach, go mbainfeadh formhór an tairbhe a d'eascródh as struchtúr den chineál sin le cúrsaí riaracháin amháin. Dá bhrí sin, is fearr a oireann cur chuige den chineál seo do scoileanna ceithre oide nó níos mó. I gcás scoileanna 1-3 oide moltar gur chóir, nuair is féidir, spreagadh a thabhairt do scoileanna cónascadh le scoileanna eile chun iad a thabhairt go leibhéal 4 oide nó níos mó. Moltar freisin, sa chás go ndéanann scoileanna cónascadh den chineál seo, go gceapfaí príomhoide riarachán ar an scoil chomh luath agus atá an scoil i dteideal an ceathrú hoide a cheapadh.

#### 4.1.2 INTEGRATION OF EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR THE GAELTACHT

It is recommended that the Gaeltacht be dealt with as a separate educational sector comprising the primary level and second level Gaeltacht schools that teach through the medium of Irish along with the support and advisory services. To give effect to this recommendation we recommend:

- The establishment of a designated Gaeltacht Education Inspectorate i.e. a dedicated unit of the Inspectorate which will function through the medium of Irish, comprised of primary and second level inspectors with the primary responsibility of providing advice and support to Gaeltacht schools and supporting the development of best practice approaches to teaching through the medium of Irish and teaching through the medium of a second language. It is recommended that this dedicated unit of the Inspectorate shall function under the auspices of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta but working with and reporting to the Inspectorate.
- The establishment of designated units of the other major educational support services currently providing support services to Gaeltacht schools. These designated support services should be dedicated to investigating the needs and requirements of Gaeltacht schools and the provision of adequate and appropriate support services through the medium of Irish. It is also recommended that these dedicated units function under the auspices of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta but working with and reporting to the primary service to which they belong.
- The establishment by An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta of a regional centre in each of the major Gaeltacht regions (with outreach centres in smaller Gaeltacht areas as appropriate) from which these support services and the Gaeltacht Inspectorate shall operate.
- Responsibility for the delivery of support programmes and smaller schemes should be left with a special section within An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta.

#### 4.1.3 NUMBER AND SIZE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE GAELTACHT

It is recommended that An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta in co-operation with the principals and boards of management of Gaeltacht primary schools undertake a review of the future of each school. This review should focus on achieving the best overall solution to the challenges faced by smaller schools. It should take into consideration the needs of the community, the needs of teachers and, above all, the need to provide Gaeltacht school children with a high quality education through the medium of Irish. It is recommended that cognisance be taken of the choices put forward by the Irish Primary Principals Network (2004) in this regard, and in particular their suggestion concerning school clusters. It must be kept in mind, however, that most of the benefit to derive from a school cluster model would be administrative in nature. Therefore, this model is more appropriate for 4 teacher schools or above. In the case of the smaller 1-3 teacher schools it is recommended that, where feasible, they should be encouraged to merge with other schools to bring them up to the 4 teacher threshold. Where schools merge in this way it is recommended that an administrative principal be appointed once schools reach the 4-teacher threshold.

#### 4.1.4 ÁISEANNA TEAGAISIC

Is gá tosaíocht a thabhairt do cheist na n-áiseanna teagaisic sna gníomhaíochtaí a eascróidh as an taighde seo. Is gá a aithint agus é seo á dhéanamh go bhfuil an cheist níos casta ná díreach tuilleadh áiseanna teagaisic i nGaeilge a chur ar fáil. Caithfear a chinntiú, tríd an mbealach ina ndéanfar na háiseanna teagaisic a fhorbairt agus a dháileadh go mbeidh deimhniú faighte ó na scoileanna agus ó na múinteoirí atá ag teagasc trí Ghaeilge go bhfuil siad chun iad a úsáid. Chuige sin moltar:

- Go bhféachfar i gcomhar leis na múinteoirí/scoileanna ar na riachtanais atá ann i ngach ábhar agus tosaíochtaí a leagan amach dá réir, ag cur san áireamh go bhféadfadh riachtanais agus tosaíochtaí difriúla a bheith ag na scoileanna atá i gCatagóir A, B agus C.
- Go dtabharfar san áireamh sna riachtanais thuas an raon iomlán áiseanna teagaisic a bhíonn in úsáid sna scoileanna, mar shampla: téacsleabhair, leabhair shaothair, cláir ríomhaireachta, físeáin, dlúthdhioscaí, cluichí, póstaer, ábhar gearrshaolach, ábhar léitheoireachta breise, scéimeanna scoilbhunaithe agus nótaí múinteora.
- Go rachfar i dtreo teacht ar chomhthuiscint idir na múinteoirí agus na foilsitheoirí leabhar ar céard atá i gceist le 'téacsleabhar oiriúnach' agus faoin leibhéal teanga atá oiriúnach do na haoisghrúpaí éagsúla, ag cur san áireamh nach ionann an leibhéal cumais sa Ghaeilge atá ag na daltaí sna catagóirí éagsúla scoile.
- Go bhféachfar le struchtúir agus próiseas a bhunú a thabharfaidh ról gairmiúil do na múinteoirí i bhforbairt áiseanna teagaisic agus ranga.
- Go bhfiosrófar cé mhéad den ábhar atá de dhíth ar na scoileanna, go háirithe an t-ábhar gearrshaolach, a d'fhéadfaí a chur ar fáil ar an idirlíon, agus na costais a bhainfeadh leis seo a dhéanamh, ag cur san áireamh an trealamh ríomhaireachta agus clódóireachta agus an oiliúint a bheadh de dhíth ó na scoileanna le lántairbhe a bhaint as a leithéid de chur chuige.
- Go bhféachfar le seirbhís ar leith a bhunú le seirbhís eolais, mhargaíochta agus dáileacháin a chur ar fáil don ábhar scoile atá ar fáil i nGaeilge.
- Go n-iarrfar ar scoileanna atá ag teagasc trí Ghaeilge tiomantas a léiriú ina bplean scoile agus ina bpolasaí Gaeilge d'úsáid áiseanna teagaisic Gaeilge mar chéad rogha, nuair atá áiseanna teagaisic oiriúnacha ar fáil, agus go gcuirfear an polasaí sin in iúl do gach múinteoir atá ag múineadh sa scoil.

#### 4.1.5 OILIÚINT MHÚINTEOIRÍ

Moltar go bhféachfar arís ar na córais atá ann le múinteoirí a oiliúint don bhunleibhéal agus don dara leibhéal agus go ndéanfar socruithe ar leith le sruth leanúnach múinteoirí a chur ar fáil a bhfuil a gcuid oideachais tríú leibhéal i ngach ábhar faighte acu trí mheán na Gaeilge agus i dtimpeallacht lánGhaeilge; agus go bhfuil soláthar déanta ina gcuid oideachais do na réimsí saineolais ar leith atá de dhíth le múineadh go héifeachtach i scoileanna Gaeltachta.

#### 4.1.4 TEACHING RESOURCES

Priority should be given to the issue of teaching resources in the follow up to this research. In so doing, cognisance must be given to the fact that simply providing more Irish-medium resources will not of itself resolve all of the problems. The provision of Irish-medium teaching resources must be approached in a way that will ensure that schools and teachers currently teaching through the medium of Irish will be committed to their use. With this in mind it is recommended:

- That an analysis of needs be carried out concerning the Irish-medium teaching resource requirements of each subject at primary and second level. This should be done in co-operation with teachers and schools and should conclude with a clear set of priorities, which take into account that each category of school may have different requirements and priorities.
- That this process should focus on the full range of teaching resources in use in schools, for example: textbooks, work books, computer programmes, videos and DVDs, compact discs, games, posters, disposable materials, additional reading resources, school based schemes and teaching notes.
- That teachers and organisations involved in the publication of Irish-medium school texts come to an understanding as to how the suitability of textbooks is defined and what level of language is appropriate for the various age groups, taking into account the varying levels of language competency in the various categories of schools.
- That a structure and process be developed that will allow teachers to have a role in the development of Irish-medium teaching resources as part of their professional and career development.
- That research be done to find out how much of the teaching resource requirements of schools, particularly those requirements that are disposable in nature, can be provided electronically through the Internet, and the costs of such provision. These costs would include adequate computer and printing equipment and appropriate training for teachers.
- That a new service be established for the marketing and distribution of Irish-medium teaching resources.
- That schools teaching through the medium of Irish be asked to make a commitment in their school plan and Irish-language policy to the use of Irish-medium teaching resources, where suitable and appropriate Irish-medium teaching resources are available, and that this policy decision be made known to the teachers.

#### 4.1.5 TEACHER TRAINING

It is recommended that the provisions made for the training of primary and post-primary school teachers be reviewed and that a specific provision be made to ensure a continuous supply of teachers who have received their third level education in all subjects through the medium of Irish and in an Irish-medium environment; and that their education covers all areas of expertise necessary for effective teaching in Gaeltacht schools.

#### 4.1.6 COMHTHÁTHÚ LE GNÉITHE EILE DEN PHLEANÁIL TEANGA

Caithefear breathnú ar obair na scoileanna sa Ghaeltacht mar ghné amháin de phróiseas pleanála teanga níos iomláine. Moltar, mar chuid den phróiseas seo, go mbunófar struchtúr cuimsitheach de sheirbhísí óige a chuirfidh leis na deiseanna spraoi, caithimh aimsire, ceoil, spóirt, agus forbartha cultúrtha atá ar fáil trí Ghaeilge d'óige na Gaeltachta. Cé gur dóigh gurbh fhearr nach mbeadh a leithéid de sheirbhís óige ag feidhmiú faoi scáth na scoileanna is cinnte go dtacódh a leithéid de sheirbhís le buanú na Gaeilge i measc dhaltá na scoileanna agus go mbeadh áiseanna na scoileanna an-úsáideach ach iad a bheith ar fáil don tseirbhís. I bhfianaise an méid seo, moltar go ndéanfadh an Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta taighde ar an gcineál struchtúr a bheadh de dhíth chun a leithéid de sheirbhís óige a chur ar fáil sa Ghaeltacht agus go rachadh siad i bpáirt leis na páirtithe eile a bheadh sásta a bheith páirteach ina leithéid de sheirbhís.

### 5. FOCAL SCOIR

Tá práinn le feidhm a thabhairt do mholtaí na tuarascála seo. Is mó fós an práinn de bharr gur beag atá sa tuarascáil seo nár tugadh chun solais roimhe seo i dtuarascálacha eile, mar a thuairiscítear thuas. Níor tharla mórán mar thoradh ar fhoilsiú na dtuarascálacha sin rud a d'fhág lagmhisneach agus frustrachas ar na múinteoirí a rinne ionchur iontu. Is buille tubaisteach eile do mheanma mhúinteoirí agus thuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta a bheadh ann dá dtarlódh an rud céanna mar thoradh ar fhoilsiú na tuarascála seo.

Tá todhchaí na Gaeltachta fite fuaite le todhchaí an chórais oideachais sa Ghaeltacht. Dá réir sin, mura bhfaightear réiteach go luath ar an gcruachás géarchéime ina bhfuil an córas oideachais Gaeltachta i láthair na huaire, tá todhchaí na Gaeltachta féin i mbaol.

#### 4.1.6 INTEGRATION WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE PLANNING

The work of Gaeltacht schools must be viewed in the context of a broader language planning strategy. It is recommended that, as part of such a strategy, a comprehensive youth service be established in the Gaeltacht to increase access for young people to Irish-medium fun, leisure, music, sport and cultural activities. While it is not recommended that such a service would operate under the auspices of schools, it is felt that such a service would assist in maintaining the use of Irish amongst Gaeltacht school children and that school facilities would, if made available, be of considerable assistance to such a service. In this context, it is recommended that An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta should initiate research into the type of organisation necessary to provide such a youth service in the Gaeltacht and that they work with other interested parties in the establishment of such a service.

### 5. FINAL COMMENT

It is imperative that the recommendations contained in this report be implemented immediately. The level of urgency involved is greater because the difficulties reported here are not new and have been highlighted in previous reports, as mentioned above. The lack of action resulting from the publication of these previous reports on Gaeltacht education has led to low morale and frustration amongst many of the teachers who participated in their preparation. If the publication of this report leads to a similar lack of action it will be a further severe blow to the morale and hopes of Gaeltacht teachers and parents.

The future of the Gaeltacht is inextricably linked to the future of the Gaeltacht education system. As a result, if the perilous current state of Gaeltacht education is not resolved, the future of the Gaeltacht itself is threatened.











