

Assessment Policy

St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra N.S.



Policy on Assessment

Introduction:

This policy sets out our approach to assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It sets out guidance on assessment in order to assist us in identifying children with various learning needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy, in order to facilitate planning for teaching in these areas.

Policy Rationale:

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy endeavours to identify at the earliest possible opportunity, children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective.

Relationship to School Ethos:

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child, the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

Aims and Objectives:

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are;

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning.
2. To create a procedure for monitoring achievement.
3. To track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers.
4. To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.

Policy Content:

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils, including the exceptionally able, so that adequate strategies are put in place early enough to facilitate remediation. Each curriculum area will be assessed to encompass the knowledge the child acquires, the skills the child learns, the attitudes and values the child develops and the dispositions the child shows using various methods of assessment. Methods of assessment will include Self-assessment (i.e. KWL Charts, Rubrics, Thumbs up, Thumbs down, Traffic lights), Conferencing, Portfolio Assessment, Concept Mapping, Questioning, Teacher Observation, Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests and Standardised Tests. This will lead to modification of teacher programmes, IPLPS (Individual Profile and Learning Programme) and IEPs (Individual Education Plans).

Standardised Testing:

The school uses the Drumconrda Primary Reading Test-(DPRT) and Drumcondra Primary Spelling Tests from First Class upwards. The Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy- Screening(DTEL-S) is given to Senior Infants. The Diagnostic Test is then given to a small number of children with low attainments in the screening test. The Sigma T Maths test is administered to all children from First to Sixth Class and the Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy- Screening(DTEN-S) is given to Senior Infants. The Diagnostic Test is then given in the same way as the Literacy counterpart. The Belfield Infant Assessment Profiles (BIAP) is given to any Junior Infant that may be presenting with early literacy or numeracy needs. Therefore, children who are experiencing difficulty are targeted at the earliest opportunity and appropriate supports are arranged, in accordance with needs identified. All tests are usually administered in the last week of May by the class teacher and the Special Education Teacher (SET) team.

Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy of all class results held in the Deputy Principal and Principal's office. Whole school results are recorded on Aladdin, the student management software system in a secure, encrypted site. Appropriate supports for the children experiencing difficulties will range from In-class support, Team Teaching, Literacy Lift Off, Ready Set Go Maths, Reading Recovery and Learning Support small groups. As agreed under Circular 56/2011 all results for 2nd, 4th and 6th are returned to the Department of Education and Skills. Equally all the parents of children from First- Sixth class will receive these results by recording the STEN score on school reports in June. Time is available after issue of reports, should parents wish to consult with class teachers to discuss their child's scores.

Diagnostic Assessment:

The school policy on Psychological Assessment is a three-step approach based on the NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) Continuum of support process.

1. Stage 1- CLASSROOM SUPPORT
2. Stage 2- SCHOOL SUPPORT
3. Stage 3- SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

Stage 1- CLASSROOM SUPPORT

- Parent/Teacher share concerns and these concerns are recorded.
- Simple informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs are identified.
- Support Plan is drawn up for the school term. The success of the plan is recorded on an ongoing basis.
- After 1 or 2 terms, if concerns remain, the teacher requests the involvement of SET teacher. Pupil moves to Stage 2.

Stage 2- SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Class teacher/SET teacher/parent re-assesses the child's needs.
- IPLP is drawn up and this will involve a more systematic gathering of information and development and monitoring of the School Support Plan.
- At the end of term 1 the plan is reviewed and modified.
- Depending on the nature of the needs, the additional teaching will be within a small group or on an individual basis or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis.
- If concerns still remain, the school consults parents to request move to Stage 3.

Stage 3- SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

- This stage applies where the needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and where progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned and reviewed interventions.
- Parent/teacher/Educational Psychologist/Child
- School formally requests a consultation/referral with Educational Psychologist.
- A new cycle of consultation, assessment, planning involving all concerned begins.
- A detailed IEP/IPLP, identifying agreed interventions and actions is drawn up.
- This review process will be ongoing.
- Decision with regard to support and allocation of resources may be made at this stage if appropriate.

School Administered Diagnostic Tests

In addition to the formal Standardised Tests we use a variety of diagnostic tests, where appropriate. These tests are listed below- • Trinity 2 R

- DEST
 - YARC- York Assessment of Reading Comprehension
 - WRIT- Wide Range Intelligence Test
 - Jackson Phonics Tests
 - Neale Analysis
 - PM Benchmark Levelling Kit

These will be administered by the SET team following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by **Circular 0013/2017** where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. Parents are provided with test results and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed. The Deputy Principal will facilitate such an assessment with NEPS psychologist.

Screening:

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in the school are;

- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile- Junior Infants
- Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy Screening-DTEL-S- Senior Infants
- Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy Screening-DTEN-S- Senior Infants ● Drumcondra Primary Reading Test-DPRT ● Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test.
- Sigma T- Maths Test
- New Non-Reading Intelligence Test(NNRIT)- Second and Fifth Class ● Teacher Observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Sight Word tests- PM high-frequency words
- Jackson phonics tests
- Free Writing samples
- Running records using the PM Benchmark Kit

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per **Circular 0013/2017**

Psychological Assessment:

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver the adequate intervention, the class teacher/Deputy Principal will contact the parents for permission to arrange a psychological assessment for their child. The most common form of assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher-designed tests, projects and homework (informal assessment). These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers. Records of teacher-designed tests are kept by the individual teachers and communicated to parents at the Parent-teacher meeting and the school report issued at the end of the school year. Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing. The most common types of informal teacher designed testing in our school are maths tests, spelling tests and running records of reading.

Identification of Pupils for Support:

Following formal and informal assessments, the following children will be prioritised for supplementary teaching support;

- Those performing at or below the 10th percentile in literacy or numeracy standardised tests.
- Pupils previously in receipt of supplementary teaching support who continue to experience significant difficulties.
- Pupils who are identified as having significant needs through the process of ongoing assessment as set out on the Continuum of Support Process.
- Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social and emotional problems, or coordination or attention control difficulties and pupils with specific learning disabilities.
- Pupils with significant educational needs.

- Pupils who present with a range of learning difficulties which may affect a pupil's ability to access the full curriculum.
- Pupils who have additional literacy or language needs including those who have English as Additional Language (EAL).
- Pupils who present as being exceptionally able who score at or above the 95th percentile in standardised tests
- Pupils with the highest score on a standard Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, (SDQ) completed by the Class Teacher, as relevant, are prioritised for supports such as Play Therapy/Art Therapy (if these services are available to the school/ during school).

Recording:

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the filing cabinet in the classroom. This is under lock and key. This file contains Standardised Test Results and End of Year Reports. This file is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progresses through the school. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for each child (Learning Support Guidelines, 2000). It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level, following consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal/SET assigned to their class. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team. The Deputy Principal in her role as SEN (Special Educational Needs) Coordinator assumes a primary role at Stage 3, when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication will be always kept open.

Storage of Records:

Student records will be kept on file in a locked filing cabinet in a secure room while the child is attending the school and online in an encrypted secure drive until the child has reached the age of 21. (see Data Protection Policy)

Success Criteria:

This policy is considered successful if;

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Procedures, roles and responsibilities regarding all assessment outlined in this policy are clear to all relevant parties
- Class Teachers and Special Education Team have clearly defined roles and objectives in the assessment process
- There is an efficient transfer of information, from teacher to teacher and from parent to teacher

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed every two years and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

References:

DES Circular 0013/2017

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000 www.sess.ie

Working Together to make a Difference for Children - NEPS

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS on June 18th, 2019 and subsequently communicated to the school community via the school's website.

Signed: _____

Frank Laffey, Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____