

**St. Mary's National School
Cobh**

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introduction

The Education Act (1998) and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003) require schools to regularly evaluate students and to periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and to their parents. In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures which provide an account of pupils' progress and achievement.

This policy on assessment was prepared in line with the *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools* (NCCA 2007).

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other relevant persons on the provision of Assessment and Reporting. Assessment procedures used in St. Mary's N.S. will contribute to pupil learning and development, by providing information which will help to identify and nurture the talents of each child in a caring environment.

Aims

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To gather information to inform planning for teaching and learning
- To provide information to ascertain Resource and Learning Support needs
- To track individual progress
- To involve pupils, teachers and parents in identifying and managing learning strengths or needs
- To ensure that assessment, recording and reporting are an integral part of teaching and learning
- To support the assessment guidelines set out by the NCCA

Objectives

- That our pupils may demonstrate what they know and understand
- That our pupils may understand how to improve their work

- That teachers may plan work that accurately reflects the needs and standards of pupils and classes
- That information may be provided to parents to enable them to support their child's learning
- That records of individual pupils' progress and attainment may be compiled

ASSESSMENT

AfL - Assessment for learning (Formative)

The following types of informal assessment methods are used in the school:

- *Teacher observation*
 - *Teacher-designed tasks and tests*
 - *Questioning*
 - *Pupil Self-assessment*
 - *Work samples, portfolios and projects*
- Various assessment methods are used, depending on age, level and subject. Teachers assemble portfolios of pupil assignments, work samples and projects.
 - The school's plan for each curriculum subject addresses the issue of assessment
 - Pupils are involved in the assessment of their own work/progress (e.g. self-correcting, compilation of portfolios and paired/collaborative assessment)

AoL - Assessment of Learning (Summative)

Standardised tests

The following standardised tests are used in the school:

- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)
 - Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
 - Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)
 - Micra-T
 - Sigma-T
 - Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test (DPST)
- Senior Infants are tested in Term 2 using the MIST
 - 1st Class are tested in Term 2 using the NRIT
 - 1st – 6th classes are tested in Term 3 using the Micra-T, Sigma-T and DPST and results are based on Spring Norms
 - The Deputy Principal is responsible for ordering, distribution and co-ordination of test materials for end-of-year standardised tests
 - LS/RT and/or class teachers are responsible for ordering, distribution and co-ordination of other test materials

- The class teacher administers the standardised tests in co-ordination with the LS/RT
- In the case of children with specific needs, the tests may be carried out on a one-to-one basis or within a small group
- Pupils who are not taking a test with their classmates complete the test under the supervision of the SEN team
- The raw score, standard score, percentile rank, and STen scores are recorded.
- The LS/RT and class teacher are involved in the analysis of results for an individual class. The SEN Co-ordinator, LS/RT and principal are involved in the analysis of results across a number of classes and at whole school level
- Information gathered from tests informs teaching and learning by showing pupils' areas of weakness, areas of strength in relation to national norms
- Results of the standardised tests from 1st-6th are communicated to parents in the end-of-year report card. The STen score is used to communicate results. An explanatory note is enclosed with the end of year report.
- The results of these tests are used to inform the SEN team of those who require further diagnostic testing. Furthermore, they have bearing on the allocation of learning support hours in the school. Those who score below the 12th percentile in either English or Maths are prioritised for learning support
- Results of the standardised tests for 2nd, 4th and 6th class are communicated to DES.

Screening Testing: *(Refer to Learning Support Guidelines and Circular 02/05)*

The following screening tests are used to facilitate the early identification of learning strengths / difficulties:

- BIAP
 - NRIT
 - MIST
 - Numeracy Baseline
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- These tests are administered by the LS and/or class teacher
 - The class teacher, LS and SEN co-ordinator are involved in interpreting results
 - Screening leads to specific intervention by the class teacher based on the staged approach (refer to SEN Policy and Stage 1 Circular 02/05)
 - Pupils who score below the specified criteria undergo further diagnostic testing
 - Parents are informed by the class teacher following diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic Assessment: *(Refer to Learning Support Guidelines, Chapter 4)*

Formal diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties. These include:

- NARA

- PAR
- Cloze
- Jackson
- Neale Analysis
- Sound Linkage
- Up and Away

(This is not an exhaustive list)

- The class teacher and LS/RT are involved in selecting pupils for diagnostic assessment
- In some cases, parents are consulted in writing prior to diagnostic assessment. However, diagnostic assessment may be carried out prior to consultation with the parents. Parents will be informed of the results following this
- The LS/RT administers the diagnostic tests
- The class teacher and LS/RT interpret the results
- The school has a staged approach to assessment to ensure that the results of the assessments inform subsequent learning plans
- For criteria used when deciding which pupils should be referred for supplementary teaching, refer to the SEN policy
- If it is felt necessary to consult a psychologist (NEPS or other) about diagnostic test results, the principal, LS/RT and/or parents arrange for such consultation

Psychological Assessment:

- The Principal, LS/RT and class teacher liaise with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required (*Stage 3, Circular 02/05*)
- The principal (in consultation with LS/RT) is responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from specialists (e.g. Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, Audiologist, etc...)
- The assessment plays an important role in drafting an educational plan for a pupil as it identifies areas of weakness and strength as well as providing recommendations for learning
- Psychological reports are stored securely in the SEN Co-ordinator's room. The Principal and the SEN Co-ordinator control access to them

Recording the results of assessment

- Assessment results are recorded using a Pupil Profile Card which is stored in each pupil's file (*Appendix 1*). From May 2015 onwards results will also be stored on Databiz
- An agreed terminology is used and understood by all teachers

- Teachers are made aware of the need to record comments in an objective and instructive manner
- Sensitive data is stored in secure filing cabinets
- Arrangements are in place for the transfer of appropriate information based on assessments. These arrangements may include formal and informal meetings, letters and phone calls
- This policy has implications for other policies and procedures the school e.g. Special needs, Record keeping, Data protection, Reports to parents

Success Criteria

The school wide implementation of this policy will ensure:

- A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning
- Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects
- Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of school year

Roles and Responsibility

The following people have particular responsibilities for aspects of this policy:

Principal

Teaching staff

Parents

Board of Management