

St. Nicholas' National School

Policy on Assessment and Recording

This policy was drafted taking into consideration 'Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools – NCCA' and the Primary Language Curriculum

Introduction

Testing, assessment and evaluation are important on-going factors in the everyday life of the classroom. The NCCA (1992) comments that;

'The teacher as a professional should have a central role in the assessment of pupils at primary level. The teacher is best placed to assess the pupil's performance and competence. Various instruments should be used by the teacher.'

Assessment in the school is an on-going process to inform and measure teaching.

The school uses *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning*.

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 whole 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 and the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that relative success, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aims / objectives of the policy are to:

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

Principles

1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment must be to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.
3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organization, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
5. We recognize the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.
6. In addition to normal assessment, opportunities are taken to record significant points in a child's development, such as:
 - a moment of 'breakthrough' in understanding
 - surprises and unusual reactions
 - interesting examples of strategies for mental calculation
 - difficulties encountered and possible reasons for them.
7. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.
8. Assessment of behaviour and performance gradually builds up into a profile for each pupil over his school career. This is a working document for the use of teaching staff only. It is not an official school record. The profiles are stored in the Principal's office and are available to teachers on request.

9. Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and should not be administratively burdensome.

Policy Content

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils including the exceptionally gifted so that adequate strategies are in place early enough to facilitate remediation.

These strategies will include pupil self assessment, (see SALF folders) pupil profiling, two way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programmes, and Student Support Files. (See also SEN Policy.)

Informal Assessment

Informal assessment takes place from the time a child is enrolled in school. Parents of new pupils are asked to fill out a pre-school observation sheet. This is kept on file in the school. (See appendix 1)

1. Informal Assessment

Homework and class work are marked and comments are made as appropriate. Marks and especially grades are not usually given. Work is ticked to indicate that the teacher has looked at it and a written comment to indicate sources of error, good points etc. will normally be made. Spelling mistakes are corrected as outlined in the school spelling policy.

2. Class work

Obviously, 'informal' assessment is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc. Check lists are maintained where appropriate. (Primary Language Curriculum)

3. Homework

Homework is checked both formally and informally in a routine way.

Completion of Project work

The completed project or notes on a topic is collected and marked. The marking recognizes excellence and indicates the areas that need improvement.

Primary to Secondary

Each pupil has an Education Passport which moves from primary into secondary. This includes a copy of their final written report issued in June of 6th class, a parent profile and a pupil profile. (see appendix 2)

Standardised Testing

The school administers the following screening and diagnostic tests. The diagnostic tests may vary from year to year and depending on the needs of the child.

Screening tests are generally administered by class teachers and diagnostic testing is generally administered by a support teacher, where it is deemed necessary.

Screening Tests

Drumcondra Reading test

Drumcondra Spelling test

Drumcondra Gaeilge test

Sigma Maths test

Micra T test

M.I.S.T.

Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy –S

Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy –S

Schonell Spelling Test

Schonell Reading Test

Micra T and Drumcondra Maths tests are administered to pupils in 1st to 6th classes in Term 1.

MIST is administered to Senior Infant pupils in Term 2.

Drumcondra English, Sigma T Maths, Drumcondra Spelling and Drumcondra Gaeilge are administered in Term 3.

Standard, percentile and sten scores are recorded and are stored on the pupil files by each class teacher. A central copy is kept on file in the principal's office. The results are also stored on the school's Aladdin system. Results of screening tests are given to parents at Parent/teacher meetings and results of tests in Term 3 are included in each pupil's written report in June. Standardised test results for 2nd, 4th and 6th classes are included in a pupil's final written report at the end of 6th class and sent on to the pupil's secondary school (when confirmation of attendance has been received) as part of the Education Passport.

Diagnostic Tests

Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy – D
Drumcondra test of Early Literacy – D
Sound Linkage Test of Phonological Awareness
Quest
NRIT
First Links
Diagnostic Reading Analysis
Neale Analysis
CHiPPS
MALT
Maths Tracker

Diagnostic tests are used following referral by the class teacher and in consultation with parents. Parents give written permission for diagnostic assessment when the pupil starts school.

Recording

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the administration office. Test scores are usually stored on a class record sheet with a copy in the office and one in the class teacher's files. Information is passed on from teacher to teacher on a need to know basis. This information is also stored on the school's Aladdin system. Children receiving extra support in school have a Support file. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).

Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if –

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in supporting the child
- Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Roles and Responsibilities

The principal teacher has overall responsibility for leading teaching and learning in the school. Class teachers have a responsibility for all the pupils in their classroom. Special Education Teachers support pupils with special educational needs within the school.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in January 2018.

Review Timetable

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

References

Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – NCCA
Primary Language Curriculum
DES Circular 0013/2017

Signed by *James Clarke* (Chairperson of the BOM]

Date: 31/01/2018

Review date: 2020