

## Assessment Policy

### Introductory Statement and Rationale

This policy was formulated by the staff of Scoil Mhuire. The policy is based on advice and information provided in the Primary Curriculum, the NCCA Website, the NCCA booklet *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools* and Circular 0138/2006, Learning Support Guidelines, The Continuum of Support.

### Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Assessment activities used in this school will contribute to pupil learning and development by gathering relevant information to guide each pupil's further learning (assessment for learning) and by providing information on each pupil's achievement at a particular point in time (assessment of learning).

### Aims of our Assessment Policy

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To assist teachers' long and short term planning
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis.

### Purposes of Assessment

- To inform planning for all areas of the curriculum
- To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils including the exceptionally able
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes and their teaching methodologies in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- To compile records of individual pupils' progress and attainment
- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
- To facilitate the active involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work

## **Definition of Assessment**

In line with the NCCA, our staff believe that assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is concerned with children's progress and achievement. It involves gathering information to understand how each child is progressing at school and using that information to further a child's learning. We concur with their definition of classroom assessment as *"the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes."* Assessment, therefore, involves much more than testing. It is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the child that include moment-by-moment conversations, observations and actions. (NCCA, *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools*. November 2007 p.7). The teacher is always in a 'hovering attendance mode' and receptive to the changes that are taking place with individual pupils and the class as a whole.

## **Range of Assessment Methods used throughout the School**

Both *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning* will be used by teachers to make professional judgements about pupil achievement/progress. Deciding what to assess will be based on the curriculum objectives in each curriculum area/subject and on what the teacher intends to help the children to learn. Each teacher will use the most appropriate assessment method to measure the extent to which children have achieved these objectives. The range of assessment methods to be used throughout the school is outlined below.

## ***Assessment for Learning***

At its heart, assessment for learning is a way of informing and involving the learners themselves in the process of assessment. The following methods of Assessment for Learning (AfL) are used in the school?

- **Teacher observation**

Each teacher will have an observation sheet for each child where significant observations of children's progress will be recorded. This may be as a result of target child observation, event samples, anecdotal observation and/or shadow study. New Guidelines for Schools p.46 – 52

Teacher observation also deals with Assessment for Learning and this is where the children are asked about how they are learning for themselves –

- to check if everybody understands the topic

- using various methods such as Thumbs up etc
- to teach children to review their work and edit their work.

To understand how far back we need to go if the prerequisite knowledge is not known for this task or topic

- **Teacher-designed tasks and tests**

Teachers will refer to the Guidelines pp.54- 59 for suggestions. Also reference will be made to pp 89 – 90 where an excellent range of sample test questions is outlined.

- **Pupil Self-Assessment**

Self-assessment is the means by which pupils take responsibility for their own learning. However, we need to train pupils to self-assess. It does not just happen!

Teachers can refer to Guidelines for Schools, pp14 – 23.

The following strategies are used to aid self-assessment.

- **Completed assignments by pupils** – projects, copybooks, activities, work samples, homework
- **Parental, pupil feedback or observation**
- **Standardised tests**
- **Diagnostic tests**
- **Assessment by psychologist**

### ***Assessment of Learning***

#### **Standardised Tests** (Guidelines pp. 60 – 69)

- The following tests are used
  - Drumcondra Literacy and Numeracy Tests (Sen. Infants)
  - N.N.R.IT.- 2<sup>nd</sup> Class and 5<sup>th</sup> Class
  - Sigma Maths – May/June, 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>
  - Micra English – May/June, 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes.
  - LASS – ICT assessment of literacy and language Pupils aged 8+
- The purpose of the standardised tests is to allow teachers to make placement and progress decisions based on assessment results and to develop appropriate interventions for certain children.
- The Principal delegates responsibility for purchase and distribution of tests

- co-ordination of testing and analysis of school's overall results in literacy and language are now the responsibility of the Teacher who has an APL duty in this area
- The class teacher administers the standardised tests.
- Pupils may be excluded from the tests if in the view of the Principal they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them taking test or in the case of newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting the test would be inappropriate.
- Each child's raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN and reading age is recorded.
- The results will be analysed at whole school level (using a data analysis grid) and at individual class level, and the information gathered from the tests will be used to inform teaching and learning.
- The STEN score will be given to parents and an explanation/descriptor will be provided with each result in the end-of-year report.
- The results will determine the allocation of learning support/resource hours in the school and the nature of the support provided (in-class or withdrawal). See Learning Support Policy.

### **Screening**

Priority will be given to pupils who are performing at or below the 10th percentile in English and Mathematics, although support will be provided for as many pupils as possible who are presenting with difficulties in literacy or numeracy..

The Continuum of Support as outlined in *Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers (DES 2007)* will be followed.

### **Diagnostic Assessment**

- Diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties. Diagnostic tests used in the school:
  - NNRT
  - Aston Index or Neale Analysis
  - LASS
  - W.R.A.T. Wide Range Achievement Tests
  - PhAB
- The learning support teacher and the class teacher are involved in selecting children for diagnostic assessment.
- Parental permission for the carrying out of these assessments is sought on each occasion.
- The learning support teacher/Principal administers the diagnostic tests and interprets the results.

If the diagnostic assessment indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial this will be arranged. In consultation with the classroom teacher, a learning programme will be drawn up.

### **Psychological Assessment**

- The Principal, class teacher and learning support teacher liaise with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required. Standard consent forms are used.
- The Principal in consultation with the learning support teacher is responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, Audiologist etc.
- The assessment is used in drafting an educational plan for the pupil
- Psychological reports ( one copy only) are stored in the pupil files in the LS Co-ordinator's room.

### **Recording the results of assessment (See guidelines p70, 71 and 79)**

- Test results are recorded on class record sheets and these are stored in the filing cabinet in SEN Room 1
  - Teachers have agreed terminology for reporting on children's progress and achievement based on STEN scores.
  - Comments and observations will be recorded in an objective and instructive manner.
  - The individual record card will be used to inform teachers of a child's assessment scores.
  - Parents will be informed at the annual parent teacher meetings, specially arranged meetings, and through the school report.
- Assessment information will be safely stored to facilitate access to it by former pupils at any stage until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday (Guidelines p.80) This has now changed under GDPR and records will be kept until the child reaches the age of 25 and then confidentially destroyed.

### **Success Criteria**

- 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.

### **Timetable for Review**

The policy will be reviewed at the end of the first year of implementation and at a minimum every 4<sup>th</sup> year thereafter. As we have decided to take on board a number of new procedures these will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended. The Principal will initiate and co-ordinate this review.

### **Ratification**

This assessment policy was officially ratified by the BoM on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

Updated following GDPR regulations in May 2018

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Josephine Henry, Chairperson.

### **Reference Section**

- Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools, NCCA, 2007
- Special Educational Needs – a Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers and Resource Pack for Teachers, NEPS, 2007
- Learning Support Guidelines, DES, 2000
- Circular 0138/2006 Supporting Assessment in Primary Schools
- Circular 02/05 Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools
- Primary School Curriculum – section on assessment for each subject
- Working together to Make a Difference for Children, NEPS
- A range of assessment tests are listed on the SESS website [www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)
- Draft Report Cards Templates. [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)
- info@ncca, September 2005. Issue 1, p. 8. Assessment for Learning
- GDPR regulations