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Assessment & Recording Policy

Introduction
This policy was drafted following a collaborative process involving the mainstream teachers and SEN teacher in the school. The development of this policy has been guided by legislative requirements enshrined in the

- *Education Act (1998) which requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents*

- *Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)*

The policy is based on advice and information provided in the Primary Curriculum, the NCCA website, the NCCA document Supporting Assessment in Primary Schools, Circular 0138/2006, Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2007) and The National 'Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life' Strategy, 2011 (also Circular 0056/2011).

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. The school policy on assessment reflects the core values and ethos of the school. Assessment activities used 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 time (assessment of learning).

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
- coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and difficulties.
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time.
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths and difficulties.
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis.

Policy Content
This policy is outlined under the following headings:

a) purposes of assessment
b) definition of assessment
c) assessment methods

d) interpreting, recording, using and reporting of assessment information

Assessment

Assessment enables the teacher to build a picture over time of the child's progress and achievement in learning. This on-going process of how the child learns as well as what the child learns shapes this picture and informs subsequent stages of the teaching and learning proces" *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools* (NCCA, 2007)

Purpose of Assessment

- To inform planning for, and coverage of, 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 contribute to the school's strategy for prevention of learning difficulties
- To monitor pupil progress and attainment
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- To provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the child is learning.
- 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 involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work
- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies
- To assess different dimensions of the child's learning and development including the cognitive, the creative, the affective, the physical and the social dimensions.

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. We concur with the definition of classroom assessment as *"the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and communicating information about a child's progress and achievement during the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes".* Assessment, therefore, involves much more than testing. It is an ongoing process that encompasses many formal and informal activities designed to monitor and improve teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum (NCCA, Supporting Assessment in Schools, April 2005 p3).

Methods of Assessment

Rahara N.S. recognises the four functions of assessment as being formative, summative, evaluative and diagnostic. Our approach to assessment focuses on the two principal, interrelated and complementary approaches namely, Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL) at all class levels. This means that evidence is used on an ongoing basis to inform teaching and learning (AfL), in addition to the periodic recording of children's progress and achievements, for the purpose of reporting (AOL). The school acknowledges the importance of a concentrated focus on Assessment for Learning, the key characteristics of which we identify as follows:

The table below outlines the main AfL and AoL techniques in practice in the school.

Assessment Practice	Purpose To enable pupil to	Operation in Rahara N.S
Conferencing	to enable the pupil, with the assistance of Teacher, to reflect on	Discussion on work through directed Teacher questioning

	his/her work.	1-1 - Small groups - Whole-class
Concept Mapping	to enable pupil to experience a range of questions to assess the progress s/he is making in their learning.	Concept-maps are used periodically at the start and end of lessons; Resources: www.bubbl.us and Mind Mapping by Tony Buzan. PDST
Questioning	to enable pupil experience a range of questions to assess the progress s/he is making in their learning.	A variety of questions are used to assess developing understanding of new learning; these range from closed questions, to more open questions to help promote higher order thinking.
Teacher Observation	to enable Teacher observe pupil play /activity/ written work/ discussion and questioning during class or group work and record specific strengths or challenges..	Use of sticky labels / Teacher Diary to note pupil learning / social interaction development.
Teacher designed tasks and tests	to enable teacher assess pupil learning through specific set tasks and tests.	Frequent oral and written tasks to determine pupil knowledge of the concepts and skills being taught. Informal assessment is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc.
W.A.L.T Chart (We Are Learning To)	Understand the learning intention of the task. Begin to fully understand what they are learning rather than doing.	Teachers will explicitly highlight to the pupils what they are being asked to do (the learning intention) at the start of lessons.
W.I.L.F Chart (What I'm Looking For)	Be clear about how their work will be judged and what the teacher wants to see in the finished task. Need to know why they are learning something so that they can see how their work fits into the "bigger picture".	Teachers will explicitly highlight to the pupils what we hope they will learn (the success criteria) in order to help them make better decisions about how to tackle the set task at the start of a lesson.
Standardised Tests	to establish a standardised measurement of pupil achievement in English reading, spelling and	Standardised tests are administered in accordance with the requirements of Circular 0056/2011 and to all classes from 1st – 6th.

	Mathematics compared to other children throughout the country at the same class level or age level.	

Other Assessments Include:

- Two stars and a Wish/Dhá Réalta's Mian – Pupils can describe what they liked about their own/peers work and what they want/could work on.
- Red and Green Cards/Cártaí dearga agus glasa to show their understanding
- Thumbs up and thumbs down/Ordóga suas agus ordóga síos to show their understanding.
- Traffic Light/Soilse tráchta: Red light needs immediate support 'I need more help'. Orange card – 'Let me try for a while and I will get back to you. Green card – Complete understanding 'I am good to go'
- KWL chart.
- Presentation scale – self assessment on their presentation
- Brain storm for recall of learning
- Think, pair and share.

Standardised Testing

The school administers Drumcondra Maths, Reading and Spelling. All classes from First class upwards are tested. The tests are administered at the end of the last term by the class teacher and/or the SET. Standard and Percentile Rankings scores are recorded on the class Record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in the Principal's office. The SET analyses the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Pupils in Junior and Senior Infants are assessed using the MIST test and BIAP.
Following DES guidelines all standardized test scores will be orally given to parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher meetings and a Standardised test score will be written in the end of year reports.

Interpreting and Recording Assessment information

In fulfilling the requirements of the Education Act (1998) individual records of pupils' learning are created and maintained, while they are attending our school. This enables the school to provide parents with assessment reports which contain accurate and clearly accessible information about their children's progress and achievement. Two kinds of records are maintained by the school:

- *Teacher Diary:*

The teacher normally keeps his/her own day-to-day record of observations, remarks, incidents, etc. as they occur in the classroom and playground. This kind of record provides the teacher with additional information about the child, which helps him/her to meet the needs of individual children more effectively. It also informs the teacher's classroom organisation.

- *Pupil Profiles/Portfolio Files:*

The main functions of these are to –
support both teachers and children in monitoring and structuring learning
-provide information for teachers when preparing reports for parents
-provide information for teachers who will have subsequent responsibility for the child's education. The portfolios aid pupil self-assessment and help pupils identify themselves as learners. The Pupil Profile takes account of the child's strengths and needs, the progress he/she has made, and any areas of learning and development that need particular attention.
Rahara N.S Pupil Profiles include:

1.   Pupil name and date of birth
2.   home contact details
3.   enrolment data
4.   school attendance record
5.   medical history (where appropriate)
6.   information concerning experiences at pre-school / other school (if made available to the school on transfer)
7.   the products of assessment (for example, completed standardised test booklets)
8.   yearly standardised scores for standardised tests
9.   copies of end-of-year Reports
10.   continuum of support details, if applicable.

Screening

To facilitate the early identification of' learning strengths / difficulties, the school administers screening tests in Junior classes. These are administered by the SET and/or Class Teacher and results interpreted in consultation. Screening may lead to specific intervention by the class teacher in line with our Staged Approach to special needs provision. In addition, the school places strong emphasis on early intervention.

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

- Early Years Easy Screen (EYES)
- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- New Non Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)
- Drumcondra Reading
- Drumcondra Spelling
- Drumcondra Maths
- (Micra & Sigma T, if the need arises)
- Sounds Write Diagnostic Assessment

These tests are administered individually or on a group or whole class basis. The BIAP and EYES are administered before Easter of each year and MIST in term 3. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per circulars 24/03 and 02/05. Sounds Write Diagnostic Assessment (used for screening purposes) is administered to all pupils in the junior room (Infants-2nd) and any senior pupil experiencing difficulties in September/October.

Diagnostic Assessment

These are administered by SET 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 02/05 and our school SEN policy, where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. Parents are advised of the outcome and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed. The Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening.

The diagnostic tests used in the school include –
- Diagnostic Reading Analysis
- Schnoell Reading Test
- Schnoell Spelling Test
- Group Reading Test
- Assessment of Comprehension and Expression (ACE)
- Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB)
- Maths Tracker (Senior and Junior)
- MALT

Psychological Assessment

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention the class teacher / Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a Psychological Assessment for their child (see SEN policy). An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention, which may be delivered through the Learning Support provision or in some cases through SET. Where resource teaching has been recommended the principal will apply to the NCSE on behalf of the child.

Psychological Assessment (refer to Circular 13 / 2017)

• The SET liaises with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required (Stage 3, Circular 02 / 05 and Circular 13/ 2017). Standard letters and consent forms are used.

•The SET is responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from specialist(s) – Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Audiologist etc.

• The recommendations from the assessment form the basis of the IEP/ Student Support File.

• Psychological reports are stored securely in a filing cabinet and the SET controls access to them.

Recording

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the administration office. Test scores are usually stored on a class record sheet on the Office laptop, with a copy in the office. Information is passed on from teacher to teacher on a need to know basis. Children receiving extra support in school have a separate file in the SEN room which contains their IPLP/GPLP, diagnostic assessments and psychological reports. These records are stored in a locked cabinet and copies are kept in the pupil file in the principal's office. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data.

Communication of Assessment Data

Further to Circular 0056/2011 Rahara N.S, in its implementation of the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy, adopts the following procedures the reporting of Standardised Testing results to Department of Education, the school BOM, parents and to a pupil's transfer school;

Reporting to parents: Results are reported to parents on the end-of-year Report; in the case of an unexpected score for a particular pupil, the Class Teacher will convey the score orally to the parent/guardian, before the Report is sent home. To maintain consistency, Standardised scores are given along with a descriptor.

Primary to Secondary

A meeting is held each year with key staff from the local second-level schools to discuss pupils' performance in their assessment tests and to report on individual pupils. This meeting is attended by the sixth class teachers and the principal.

For pupils leaving the school, the principal will send a copy of the end-of-year report card to the post-primary school in which the child transfers (circular 56/2011). This information is only provided after enrolment in the post-primary school has been accepted. From 2014/15 we will use the Educational Passport materials which include a 6th Class report card template and a My Profile sheet completed by pupils (Circular 45/2014).

Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if –

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in staged approach
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers
- Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for the different aspects.

- The students will reach their maximum potential through the early intervention resulting from the implementation of the above policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

SET and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education team. The Principal 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 must be always kept open.

Implementation

This policy will be fully implemented by October 2023.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in 27th September 2023 and communicated to parents thereafter.

Reference Section

- Learning Support Guidelines 2000, Department of Education.
- Circular 02/05 Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils Who Need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools.
- Department of Education Circular 13/ 2017: Special Education Teaching Allocation
- Primary School Curriculum – section on assessment for each subject area.
- NEPS – Working Together to Make A Difference For Children.
- Drumcondra English Profiles. G. Shiel and R. Murphy ERC.
- Common Sense Methods for Children with Special Needs. P. Westwood. Routledge Falmer.
- Assessment in The Primary School Curriculum. Guidelines for Schools. NCCA 2007.
- A range of assessment tests are listed on the SESS website www.sess.ie.
- Initial Steps in the Implementation of The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (Circular 0056/2011) Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life, Department of Education, 2011. Resources www.ncca.ie Assessment in the Primary School: Guidelines for Schools (2007)

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Dated: _____

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Dated: _____