

St. Brigid's N.S. Annacurra

Policy on Assessment

Introduction:

This draft policy was finalised in February 2013 during Croke Park Hours by the staff of Annacurra N.S. This policy was drawn up in response to:

'Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools (NCCA)
and in compliance with

Circular 0018/2012 - Supporting Assessment: Standard Testing in Primary
Schools.

Circular 0056/2011 – Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy
and Numeracy Strategy.

Policy Rationale:

A review of current practice was due and all elements of assessment were due for evaluation. 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 or exceptional talent and put in place a school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective. The assessment policy will inform the learning and teaching in all classrooms so that all children are reaching their potential and any marked changes in pupil profiles may be noted and addressed.

Relationship to School Ethos:

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child. The school is governed by the Department of Education and Skills Legislation and is under Patronage of the Catholic Diocese of Ferns.

Review and Research

Review of assessment practice in our school shows that assessment may be informal or formal and includes:

- Teacher observation
 - Teacher-designed tasks and tests
 - Completed assignments by pupils – projects, copybooks, activities, work samples, homework, portfolios...
 - Parental, pupil feedback or observation
 - Standardised tests i.e. Micra-T and Sigma-T from 1st Class to 6th Class on an annual basis in May, MIST screening test done in senior infants. NRIT done in 1st and 5th class.
 - Further Commercial tests are also used on an individual teacher basis and include Schannel Reading and Spelling Tests, The Ballard Westwood Mental Arithmetic Test
- Termly Maths Assessments (Criterion based Tests) based on Mathemagic are administered from 1st class to 6th Class
- Diagnostic tests – e.g. Neale Analysis
 - Assessment by NEPS psychologist

Review involved looking at and reference to-

- Other policies that the school has in place and which may have a bearing on this policy *e.g. Learning Support, Record keeping, Special Needs, SNAs, Curriculum plans, Homework, Enrolment, Data Protection etc.*
- Guidelines for Schools; Learning Support Guidelines; Curriculum – sections on Assessment; standardised and/or diagnostic tests; educational publications; procedures in other schools; legislation and websites. *See Reference Section.*

Issues that needed to be addressed:

Produce and publish a comprehensive Whole School Policy on Assessment to be followed by Teaching Staff.

Aims and Objectives:

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are;

1. To benefit pupil learning
2. To monitor learning processes
3. To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
4. To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths and difficulties
5. To assist the long and short term planning of teachers
6. To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a school basis

Purposes of assessment:

- To inform planning for (long and short term), 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 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

Definition of Assessment

Our staff concurs with the NCCA 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.**” (NCCA, Supporting assessment in Schools, April 2005 p.3)

Range of Assessment Methods used Throughout the School:

In the course of engaging in both assessment for learning and assessment of learning, teachers will use the following to make judgments about pupil achievement/progress:

- *Oral responses of pupils*
- *Peer assessment*
- *Pupil 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 for learning:

Informal assessment methods are used in the school appropriate to each curriculum area (Refer to each individual curriculum policy for appropriate informal assessment) e.g.

- *Teacher observation*
- *Teacher-designed tasks and tests*
- *Work samples, portfolios and projects*

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 quizzes.

Schonell spelling test at Christmas from 1st-6th.

Ballard and Westwood 3 times per year, Dec. April and June from 1st class to 6th class.

Maths Assessment test- 3 times per year and an end of year test.

Results of the test are kept on record and passed on to the next teacher the following year.

Tracker children (4)- 3 times per year and all results are passed on to the next teacher the following year.

Junior Infants are tested on letter sounds and letter recognition, blending and sight words in November and February.

Senior infants are tested on dictation in November and February.

Pupil and parental questionnaires as part of School Self Evaluation Process.

Assessment of Learning

Standardised Testing:

The school has in recent years used Micra-T and Sigma-T to assess Literacy and Numeracy respectively. All classes from First class upwards are tested. The tests are usually administered in the last two weeks of May by the class teacher. Junior Class Teachers are assisted by Resource and Learning Support teachers. Where appropriate, and following strictly to the guidelines given for administration of each test level some classes may be tested concurrently with others. Different Forms at each level are presented to children sitting side by side to discourage copying. The Staff analyse the results in June and following consultation with Staff and parents, resources are allocated to pupils where appropriate in September. (Special Needs Policy)

The MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test) is administered annually in Feb/Mar to assess pupils in Senior Infants. This test is administered and analysed by the Principal/Resource Teacher, Learning Support Teacher and class Teacher.

NRIT (No Reading Intelligence Test) is administered to First class in May.

Purchase of Standardised Tests (Micra-T and Sigma-T) is done by the School Secretary and is co-ordinated by the School Principal and Deputy Principal. The MIST test is co-ordinated by the Principal.

Children with Special Educational Needs are administered Standardised Tests only if it is appropriate to do so.

Children with Special Educational Needs are given a separate activity in the Classroom or in the Resource Room as appropriate during administration of the Tests.

Screening:

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

- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRVT)
- Sigma T and Micra T

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. The MIST is administered on a class basis around Feb. /Mar. of each year. The NRVT is done each year in May with 1st and 5th class. The Schonell Spelling test is administered at Christmas by class teachers. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per **Circular 24/03** and **Circular 02/05**.

School Self Evaluation

In accordance with School Self Evaluation Guidelines 2012/2013 more specific assessment in Literacy and Numeracy and one other area is being carried out by the Annacurra N.S. School community over a four year period leading to a Self Evaluation Report and a School Improvement Plan in the 2012/2013 school year and annually thereafter. (School Improvement Plan)

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic tests used by the school. Such tests are administered by the Learning Support and Resource Teachers following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. Signed permission is provided by parents before Diagnostic testing is done. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by **Circular 02/05** 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 Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening and the process is co-ordinated by the Principal/Learning Support team.

The diagnostic tests used in the school include;

- Neale Analysis
- YARK

Psychological Assessment:

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator/Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a psychological assessment for their child. An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it 'Learning Support Resource' hours or/ and an 'Individual Education Plan'.

Recording:

Raw Scores of Standardised Micra-T and Sigma-T are marked by the Class Teacher. The electronic software is used by the School Secretary to input data and a hard copy for each Class for both Sigma-T and Micra-T is printed out and maintained in a file in the School Office. Results are stored in accordance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Legislation. The STEN score and an explanation/descriptor is recorded and related to parents in the School Record Report for each child and the results are explained in more detail using the Standard Score and Percentile at the annual Parent Teacher Meetings held in Oct. /Nov.

Aggregated scores for Literacy and Numeracy for 2nd, 4th and 6th Class are submitted to the Board of Management and uploaded online to the Department of Education and Skills on an annual basis.

The MIST results are recorded, reported, stored and communicated to parents immediately if a need arises.

A copy of the MIST results are stored in accordance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Legislation.

When reporting orally and when writing written reports comments are delivered by teachers in an objective instructive manner to parents/guardians. Parents do not receive any information except that which pertains to the performance of their own child/children. Sensitive data is made known on a need to know basis in accordance with legislation (Data Protection and Freedom of Information).

Samples of class work may be kept by class teachers and the school digital camera may be used to record Visual Art Work and Projects. (See Appendix 2)

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the administration office in a locked filing cabinet. This file contains the pupil's Standardised test sheets and the end of year reports. The information in this file is passed from teacher to teacher on a need to know basis as the child progresses through the system. 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 a staged approach
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers at the end of the school year through scheduled meetings during Croke Park hours.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All teachers assume shared responsibility for in-class assessment. 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 learning Support Co-Ordinator consultation with 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.

Data Protection

This policy is run in conjunction with Annacurra N.S.'s **Record and Reporting/Data Protection Policy**

References:

DES Circular 02/05, 24/03, 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

Drumcondra English Profiles. G. Shiel & R. Murphy, ERC, 2000

Primary School Curriculum – section on assessment for each subject

Education for Persons with SEN Act 2004

Education Act 1998

Data Protection

Implementation:

This policy complements the individual assessment procedures noted in each individual curriculum area plan.

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was ratified by the **Board of Management** on **20 May 2013** and communicated to parents thereafter.

Reviewed/Updated January 2016

Updated Sept 2020

Signed: _____

Fr. John-Paul Sheridan Chairman Board of Management,

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

Appendix 1

Assessment of Learning (AOL) is used to provide a summary of what the student has achieved at fixed points, such as at the end of a period of study, or when a unit of work is completed or at the end of an academic year. Information from assessment of learning can be used to report to others, such as parents and other teachers.

Teacher Observation

Questioning. Teacher and student asking questions.

Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests – Written or Oral assessments or practical assignments developed by the teacher.

Conferencing – At designated times during the school year, the student's work and progress can be the subject of meetings between teacher and parent, teacher and teacher.

Concept Mapping – at the end of a unit of work, can now evaluate the level of students' understanding of topic and/or effectiveness of teaching in support of students' learning Can be used for SESE, SPHE (Page 36 of Guidelines for examples)

Appendix 2

Assessment for Learning (AFL) takes place when the teacher shares information about the student's learning with the student and when the teacher uses this information to plan the next steps in their teaching and in the students' learning.

Self Assessment is when a student looks at their own work in a reflective way, identify aspects that are good / could be improved and then set learning targets for themselves. The skills of Self Assessment need to be learned and practiced by the student over time.

Thumbs Up / Thumbs Down – Students showing their level of feeling / understanding by pointing thumbs up or down. (All subjects)

Traffic Lights – Draw red, amber, green circle at end of work to show level of understanding / feeling. Suitable with young students. Cards (Red=I don't understand, Amber= I'm not quite there, Green=I understand) are useful during group work, whole class sessions.

Talk Partners/Buddies – students share with talk partner/buddies 3 new things they learned, what they found easy/difficult and something they would like to learn in the future.

Drafting, revising, editing and publishing a piece of his/her own writing.

Choosing the best sample of his/her own work to include in a portfolio for SESE, Art Education, SPHE

Using questions for Self Assessment. Children work in groups at end of lesson.

Where did I get stuck? Who did I ask? What did I do? What new thing did I learn? What helped me best?

Student thinking about their work using guided questions, 'Know-Want to Know-Learned' Grid (KWL Grid) – See Attached. Can be used for SESE, Maths Concept, etc Can be used by individual student, students working in pairs (Conferencing) or in groups.

KWL Grid

Name _____

Date _____

Subject _____

K (What I Know Already)	W (What I Want to Know)	L (What I Have Learned)

Complete at Start of Lesson

Complete End of

Lesson

Using an Evaluation Sheet for Self Assessment, Individual/Pairs/Groups.

Conferencing – At designated times during the school year, the student's work and progress can be the subject of meetings between student and teacher.

Collaborative Assessment – Student or Teacher chooses a sample of student's work. Teacher and student together look at and talk about it, identifying positive features about it and points for improvement – English / Gaeilge / SPHE / SESE / Arts Education.

Portfolio - Teacher provides folders. Periodically, the teacher and/or student select a piece of work, using agreed criteria. The teacher / student (the person who chose the piece) attaches a short written statement explaining why this piece was selected. Teacher can write a comment relating to learning targets. Samples to show progression, over time, on selected learning goals. (Art initially).

Concept Mapping – at the beginning of a unit of work, can give information to teachers about child's current level of understanding/misunderstanding about a particular concept. Can be used for SESE, SPHE (Page 36 of Guidelines for examples).

Questioning. Teacher and student asking questions.