

Assessment Policy

Introduction

This policy was drafted following discussion and sharing of practice in the College of Teachers meetings in the Autumn Term of 2014.

Policy Rationale

The school acknowledges that assessment is an essential element of the processes of teaching and learning. It provides the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the child is learning. This information in turn enables the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the child's learning and adapt his/her teaching strategies and/or the learning activities, as appropriate.

Relationship to School Ethos

The school aims to bring an holistic approach to the education and development of each child. An effective assessment practice helps to ensure that children are experiencing success in school, thereby bolstering confidence and self esteem.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aims / objectives of the policy are to:

- facilitate improved pupil learning
- establish procedures for monitoring pupil progress
- identify students in need of learning support and resource teaching
- assist the long and short term planning of teachers
- coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis
- involve parents and pupils in the work of identifying individual strengths and areas for development

Assessment in the Infants Classes

Informal Assessment

The child's perspective on the world and on his/her experience of learning is more holistic in the early years of primary school. Assessment is therefore largely informal - observations of the child, discussions with the child, and active listening to the child in a variety of learning situations. The teacher and assistants' observations are noted in the Kindergarten Assessment Book when this is deemed to be appropriate.

Formal Assessment

The teacher keeps a portfolio of children's drawings and photographs of their activities. In the Spring Term of the Senior Infant year, the first formal assessment is made of early literacy, numeracy and developmental skills. This is to identify any children who may be experiencing learning difficulties and who may require learning support in the acquisition of formal skills.

Assessment in the Main School Classes (1st – 6th)

Informal Assessment

Informal assessment is a part of all lessons as teachers observe the children's responses to oral work, participation in group work, conceptual and skill development, etc.

Homework and class work are marked and comments are made as appropriate. Work is ticked and dated to indicate that the teacher has looked at it, and written comments indicate strengths and areas for development.

Teachers record observations in a Teacher's Record.

Formal Assessment

Each teacher keeps a set of portfolios for their class. These Pupil Files contain:

- samples of children's work in the curriculum areas of numeracy and literacy, SESE, and visual arts, including teachers' assessment notes where appropriate
- teacher designed assessments
- learning objective checklists for all subjects including PE and French
- children's self-assessments (for 3rd/4th & 5th/6th Classes)

Standardised Assessment

Pupils in First Class are assessed using the MIST test.

The Micra English Assessments are administered in the early part of the Summer Term of each year to all children. The Sigma Maths Assessments are administered in the same period to all children except those in First Class. STEN and Percentile Rankings scores are recorded electronically on the Class Record template and a printed copy stored by each individual teacher, with a further copy held in the School Office. The accompanying software allows individual pupil tracking over the years, and comparisons of different year results.

Individual results indicate children who may need learning support interventions, or who may be exceptionally gifted. Study and discussion of whole class and whole school results feeds into the choice of priorities for the School Improvement Plan.

Assessment in Learning Support & Resource Teaching

Diagnostic Assessments

NARA Reading Assessments: The progress of children who are receiving support for reading difficulties is measured in June and December using the Neales Analysis Reading Assessment, it assesses Accuracy, Comprehension, and Rate. It can also be used as a diagnostic reading test.

Maths Tracker Junior and Senior: This ICT assessment assesses all strands units from classes 1-6. This is used as a diagnostic tool and to assess progress of interventions as needed.

Schonell Spelling test: This test gives a spelling age and is used to assess if remedial work is necessary.

MATA sa Rang Assessments: This is used throughout the instructional term and it identifies weaknesses/ gaps needing intervention in the Number Strand.

Individual Education Plans (IEP): Under the terms of the Education For Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) each child assessed with a special educational need receiving Resource hours has an Individual Education Plan. Teachers, parents, professionals supporting the child and where possible the child themselves are consulted in the preparation of these Education Plans.

The IEP outlines the child's specific strengths and challenges and sets SMART targets to address these. It is both an Assessment of Learning (AOL) and an Assessment For Learning (AFL). It is drafted at the start of the school year. The targets are reviewed and revised midway through.

Individual Profile and Learning Programmes (IPLP)

Where children score below Sten 4 on the MICRA or SIGMA tests of literacy and numeracy, they will be allocated intervention time with the Learning Support teacher. An IPLP is completed for each child every half year. The learning targets for each child assessed are written up for the period.

Informal Assessment

As Learning Support and Resource involves teaching smaller groups, or individuals, it provides ample opportunity for Teacher observation and Teacher conferencing.

Children in Resource and Learning Support are also actively encouraged to self-assess. Teacher designed tasks are set and marked. Work is either discussed with the child or suggestions for improvement are written.

Where objectives are social or behavioural, checklists are often used to record frequency and improvements in behaviour.

Teachers observations are noted.

Communication of school assessments

Parents

Report Cards issued to parents at the end of each school year, using the narrative option within the NCCA choice of templates, record salient information about the child's educational progress and achievement (including interests, strengths and needs).

Teachers meet with parents individually during the Spring Term to discuss their children's progress, achievements, and areas for development.

Following DES guidelines all standardized, the child's STEN scores are recorded in the end of year Report Cards.

Parents of children receiving Resource teaching hours meet with the Resource teacher at the start of the school year to draft the IEP and midway through to review and revise the IEP. Parents



of children receiving Learning Support meet with the teacher to discuss progress in December and June.

Primary to Secondary

For pupils leaving the school, the most recent STEN scores are passed on to the new school.

Where children have specific learning needs, the resource teacher can liaise directly with the corresponding SEN teacher.

Implementation

This policy will be fully implemented by December 2014.

Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed in 4 years' time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

References

Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools NCCA

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: (Chairperson)