



ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introduction

This policy sets out our approach to assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It sets out guidance on assessment in order to assist us in identifying children with various learning needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy, in order to facilitate planning for teaching and learning in these areas.

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1.0 Policy Rationale

At the core of this 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 class or school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective, so that it will benefit and inform teaching and learning in our school,



it will ensure that our approach reflects current practices, and it sets out the use and purpose of standardised testing in our school.

2.0 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 enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are;

- To evaluate pupil learning and facilitate improvement
- To create a procedure for monitoring achievement.
- To monitor learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers.
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole-school basis, involving parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths, styles or difficulties
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time

4.0 Policy Content

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and to identify the needs of all pupils, including the exceptionally able, so that adequate strategies are put in place early enough to facilitate remediation. Each curriculum area will be assessed to encompass the knowledge the child acquires, the skills the child learns, the attitudes and values the child develops and the dispositions the child shows using various methods of assessment.

5.0 Types and Functions of Assessment

5.1 There are two types of assessment: *Assessment for Learning* and *Assessment of Learning*

Assessment for Learning	Assessment of Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ongoing process of recognising and responding to the pupil's learning in order to enhance his/her development • Pupil-centred and pupil-directed • Goal is to enable learners to further their own learning 	<p>Involves assessing a pupil's learning at the end of a given instructional period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-led • Goal is to establish levels of attainment



Good AfL leads to better AoL outcomes.

5.2 There are four functions of assessment which include formative, evaluative, summative and informative:

- Formative: Helps the pupils in the process of learning.
- Evaluative: Helps the teacher to evaluate the learning activities provided. Pupils are also involved in assessing their own work.
- Summative: Provides information for reports and school records.
- Informative: Provides information for parents and for the pupil's next teacher.

6.0 Methods of Assessment

Assessment practices in Ballylinan N.S. will include some or all of the following:

- Self-assessment (e.g. KWL Charts, Rubrics, Thumbs up, Thumbs down, Traffic lights, 2 Stars and a Wish, W.A.L.T., W.I.L.F.)
- Questioning (teacher or peer)
- Conferencing (teacher-led and pupil-led)
- Portfolio (e.g. work samples, learning logs/journals, projects)
- E-portfolios
- Concept Mapping
- Teacher Observation
- Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests
- Standardised Tests

Outcomes of these will inform future teaching and lead to modification of teacher programmes and Classroom/School Support Plans.

7.0 Classroom Assessment

The most common forms of assessment used in our school take place on a daily basis in the classroom. These would include teacher observation, teacher-designed tests, conferencing, work samples, 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.



8.0 Standardised Testing

The school uses the Micra-T (literacy) and Sigma-T (maths) standardised tests. They are administered to all children from 1st to 6th classes (*Note*: exemption from Standardised Testing is considered when deemed necessary c.f. Circular 56/2011). These tests are usually administered in the last weeks of May each year, by the class teacher and the Special Education Teacher (SET) team, where necessary. Whole school results are recorded on Aladdin, the student management software system, in a secure, encrypted site. As agreed under Circular 56/2011 all results from 2nd, 4th and 6th classes are returned to the Department of Education and Skills. Parents of children from 1st to 6th classes will receive these results by recording the STEN score on school reports in June. Time is available after the issuing of reports, should parents wish to consult with class teachers to discuss their child's scores.

9.0 Assessment administered at School Support/School Support Plus level

9.1 Screening Tests:

Screening tests are used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses. These tests are typically conducted by a S.E.T. Some of the screening tests used in Ballylinan N.S. include:

- Alpaca – Junior Infants & Senior Infants (first term only)
- Test 2R – Senior Infants
- Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test (1st – 6th classes)
- New Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT) – 2nd & 5th classes
- Dyslexia Screener
- Words Their Way Assessment
- Ballard and Westwood Timed Arithmetic Test
- PM Benchmark Levelling Kit

9.2 Diagnostic Tests

In addition to the formal Standardised Tests, it may be necessary for SETs to conduct additional testing. For this, we use a variety of diagnostic tests, where appropriate. Some of the diagnostic tests administered in Ballylinan N.S. include:

- Dyslexia Portfolio
- The British Vocabulary Scale (BPVSIII)
- York Assessment of Reading Comprehension - YARC
- WIST
- Neale Analysis
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT)
- Numeracy Progress Test



These tests are administered by the SET team 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 0013/2017 where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing/psychological assessment.

10.0 Identification of Pupils for Support

Following formal and informal assessments, children will be prioritised for supplementary teaching support, outlined below, as per our Inclusion and Special Education Policy. Therefore, children who are experiencing difficulty are targeted at the earliest opportunity and appropriate supports are arranged, in accordance with needs identified. Appropriate supports for the children experiencing difficulties will range from in-class support, co-teaching, Literacy Lift-Off, Ready Set Go Maths, individual or small-group learning support.

1. Children with a very high level of need

This can include children with needs documented by an external professional, such as:

- Physical disability
- Hearing and/or visual impairment
- Emotional and behavioural disturbance
- Mild, moderate or severe general learning disability
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Assessed syndrome
- Specific speech and Language disorder/impairment
- Multiple disabilities

2. Early intervention

- Typically, Infants to 1st class

3. Children who have little to no knowledge of English as a first language

4. Children with receptive and/or expressive language difficulties

5. Children in 1st or 2nd classes with difficulties in literacy, as identified by standardised, screening and/or diagnostic tests.

6. Children in 3rd, 4th or 5th classes with difficulties in literacy, as identified by standardised, screening and/or diagnostic tests.

7. Children in 1st or 2nd classes with difficulties in numeracy, as identified by standardised, screening and/or diagnostic tests.

8. Children in 3rd, 4th or 5th classes with difficulties in numeracy, as identified by standardised, screening and/or diagnostic tests.

9. Children in 6th class with difficulties in literacy, as identified by standardised, screening and/or diagnostic tests.

10. Children in 6th class with difficulties in numeracy, as identified by standardised, screening and/or diagnostic tests.



11. Children identified as exceptionally able, as informed by standardised test results and teacher observations, where there are sufficient resources available to cater for this group.

11.0 Levels of Support

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables schools to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students. Using the Continuum of Support framework, schools can identify students' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. Based on assessments conducted, an appropriate level of support will be provided to the child, using this staged approach:

- Stage 1- CLASSROOM SUPPORT
- Stage 2- SCHOOL SUPPORT
- Stage 3- SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

11.1 Stage 1- CLASSROOM SUPPORT

- Parent/Teacher share concerns and these concerns are recorded.
- Simple informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs are identified.
- Classroom Support Plan is drawn up for the school term. The success of the plan is recorded on an ongoing basis.
- After 1 or 2 terms, if concerns remain, the teacher requests the involvement of SET. Pupil moves to Stage 2.

11.2 Stage 2- SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Class teacher/SET/parent re-assesses the child's needs.
- School Support Plan is drawn up and this will involve a more systematic gathering of information.
- The plan is reviewed and modified.
- Depending on the nature of the needs, the additional teaching will be within a small group or on an individual basis or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis.
- If concerns still remain, the school consults parents to discuss a move to Stage 3.

11.3 Stage 3- SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

- This stage applies where the needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and where progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned and reviewed interventions.
- A discussion may be had between parents, class teacher, SET and Principal regarding the involvement of external supports i.e. intervention from an Educational Psychologist, Speech and Lang, Therapist, Occupational Therapist.



- A new cycle of consultation, assessment, planning involving all concerned begins.
- A School Support Plan identifying agreed interventions and actions is drawn up.
- This review process will be ongoing.

12.0 Psychological Assessment

In some cases, where class and/or school-based interventions are not sufficient in helping the child progress, further investigation may be required. In such cases, the class teacher and/or SET will contact the parents to discuss the possibility of a referral for a psychological assessment for their child. If agreed upon, this assessment would be conducted by a Psychologist, either privately or via the NEPS/SCPA systems. Based on the outcome of a psychological assessment, a report would be generated and shared with the parents and relevant teachers in the school. Recommendations in the report may provide some guidance for parents and teachers in how best to support the child going forward.

13.0 Recording

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the filing cabinet in the office. This file contains Standardised Test Results and End of Year Reports. This file is available to relevant class teachers and SETs as the child progresses throughout the school. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data. The results of many assessments are uploaded to Aladdin, where the facility to do so is available on this platform. Relevant SETs retain assessments of children on their caseload.

14.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The class teacher has primary responsibility for each child (Learning Support Guidelines, 2000). It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level, following consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal/SET assigned to their class. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team. The SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) can help to facilitate interventions at Stage 3, when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication will be always kept open.

15.0 Storage of Records

Student records will be kept on file, both in hard copy and on Aladdin while the child is attending the school, and until the child has reached the age of 21.

16.0 Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if;



- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Procedures, roles and responsibilities regarding all assessment outlined in this policy are clear to all relevant parties
- Class Teachers and Special Education Team have clearly defined roles and objectives in the assessment process
- There is an efficient transfer of information, from teacher to teacher and from parent to teacher

17.0 Ratification & Communication

This review was ratified by staff and BOM in _____

Chairperson: _____ Principal: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____