

Scoil Bhríde, Rathcormac

Assessment Policy

Introductory Statement

This assessment policy was formulated by Carol Caplice (AP2) during the school year 2018/2019 in consultation with principal, SEN co-ordinator, teaching staff, parents and the Board of Management. The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of evaluation to the students and their parents. The school's assessment policy contains a written statement of aims and outlines how our school will use assessment to meet the needs of children, teachers, parents and other relevant parties. This 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" (2007)

Policy Rationale

The core objective of this policy is that all children would experience success at school. We will endeavour to identify children who may have learning difficulties or other needs at the earliest possible opportunity and put in place a coordinated school response to their needs. Continued monitoring of each child's progress is important for teacher planning and for reporting on achievements. The outcome of teacher assessment and of pupil self- assessment should help pupils to become more involved in developing their own expectations of their learning. Assessment will provide information for pupil, parents, teachers, relevant outside agencies, Board of management and the D.E.S.

Relationship to the Vision and Mission Statement of Scoil Bhríde

In Scoil Bhríde, we provide an inclusive, caring learning environment. We recognise and support the varying needs of each child and endeavour to enable children to become confident, successful and independent learners. We encourage all children to achieve their potential and strive for excellence. Assessments and assessment activities in this school 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). We also provide opportunities for self-assessment to support independent learning and to foster life-long learning skills.

Aims of this policy

- To facilitate improved pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes / achievement
- 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
- To comply with DES regulations regarding formal standardised testing/assessment
- To facilitate the involvement of pupils in self- assessment

Definition of Assessment

The definition of assessment as stated by the NCCA is 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.” (NCCA, Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools. November 2007, p.7). Assessment therefore applies to all children and not just those experiencing difficulty with learning. The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy endeavours to identify at the earliest 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.

Legislation

This assessment policy is guided, at the time of drafting, by relevant acts of legislation including:

- The Education Act (1998);
- The Data Protection Act (2003) and GDPR (2018)
- The Equal Status Act (2000);
- The Education Welfare Act (2000);
- The EPSEN Act (2004);

Documentation

This assessment policy is also guided by:

- The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020 (DES);
- Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2007).

Purposes of Assessment

“Assessment is about building a picture, over time, of a child’s progress and of achievement in learning across the curriculum” (NCCA, 2007, p.7).

In our school, we employ a continuum of assessment methods to include both Assessment of Learning (AoL) and Assessment for Learning (AfL). The purpose of assessment in our school is:

- To inform planning for all areas of the curriculum, and
- To assess the effectiveness of a particular programme or intervention initiative
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils / groups of pupils, including the exceptionally able;
- To contribute to the school’s strategy for the prevention of learning difficulties;
- To monitor pupil progress and attainment;
- To enable children to be involved in pupil self-assessment;
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes and differentiate 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 enable teachers to monitor their own teaching approaches and methodologies.

The two principal approaches to assessment are:

- **Assessment for Learning (AfL)** also known as formative assessment

Assessment for learning seeks to identify the next steps needed to make progress. It takes into consideration pupil's strengths and challenges. It enables continuous reflection on what pupils know and what they need to learn next. It also promotes immediate intervention and enables teachers to link judgements to learner intentions. AfL helps teachers and children to focus on:

- a) Where are children **now** in their learning?
- b) Where are children **going** in their learning?
- c) **How** will children **get** to the **next point** in their learning?

- **Assessment of Learning (AoL)** also known as summative assessment

Assessment of learning provides a summary judgement of what has been learned at a particular point in time. Assessment of learning compares children to externally agreed criteria and standards. It identifies gaps in pupil's knowledge and understanding.

These interrelated and complementary approaches emphasise two aspects of assessment that are central to the work of teachers in our school. The teacher uses evidence on an on-going basis to inform teaching and learning (AfL). The teacher periodically records children's progress and achievement for the purpose of reporting to parents, teachers and other relevant persons (AoL).

Range of Assessment Methods used Throughout the School

An overview of our assessment strategies and the range of assessment methods used in Scoil Bhríde are outlined in this policy. Material assessed is based on the curriculum objectives in each curricular or subject area (Primary Curriculum). Teachers choose the most appropriate assessment method to measure the achievement of these objectives or to ascertain how to progress with this curricular area. Teachers will take care to use a variety of assessment methods throughout the year including pupil self-assessment. Teachers document their intended assessment methods in their personal planning and in the cuntas míosúil.

A range assessment methods are used including:

- Teacher observation;
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Sharing the lesson intention and devising success criteria – E.g. WALT (We are learning to...), WILF (What I'm looking for), KWL, checklists or rubrics
- Pupils work samples / portfolios;
- Error analysis, (which also informs planning and teaching);
- Homework analysis;
- Parental or pupil feedback
- Assessment for the purposes of grouping pupils for team-teaching initiatives
- Conferencing
- Checklists
- Standardised tests
- Diagnostic tests
- Formal assessments from a psychologist or other outside professional

- Pupil Self-Assessment including: - Appendix 2.2 (p14-21 of NCCA Assessment in the Primary School, Guidelines), Appendix 2.3
 - (i) Concept Mapping;
 - (ii) KWL Charts;
 - (iii) Rubrics;
 - (iv) Talk Partners/Buddies (Conferencing);
 - (v) Traffic Lights;
 - (vi) Use of simultaneous individual answering, (e.g. Thumbs up-Thumbs down / Digit Cards etc.);
 - (vii) Plus, Minus and Interesting (PMI) diagrams;
 - (viii) Ladders;
 - (ix) Questioning for self-assessment;
 - (x) Pupil Questionnaire -“My Thoughts About School”, (from “Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers” document);

Assessment for the purposes of grouping pupils for team-teaching initiatives

Classes that are partaking in team-teaching initiatives such as Lift-Off to Literacy/Literacy stations or Mata sa Rang will be assessed through specific whole class assessments and/or one on one assessments. This is for the purposes of creating groups to facilitate team teaching. Pupils are reassessed at the end of the initiative to monitor and determine progress. Pupils may be reassessed at any stage throughout the duration of the initiative. Pupils who have not made progress may be considered for the Staged Approach.

Standardised tests

Schedule for standardised tests: Appendix 1.1

List of standardised tests available: Appendix 1.2

The purpose of Standardised testing is to monitor progress, inform decision making regarding additional support and the implementation of intervention strategies and for providing feedback on progress to parents. Standardised Test results for Rang 2, Rang 4 and Rang 6 are forwarded to the Department of Education in June of each year, as per the terms of Circular 56/2011

- Tests are administered & corrected by the class teacher with the support of a learning support teacher.
- Results are recorded on the pupil profile in Aladdin. A Class Record Sheet is placed in the Standardised Test Results file in the administration office.
- Individual pupil’s test booklets (if used) are retained in store, (securely locked at all times), for the period of one year, after which they are shredded.
- Aggregate scores are forwarded to the Department of Education for the required classes and are also presented to the Board of Management at the end of each year, (as per Circular 56/2011).
- Test results will be forwarded to each 6th class pupils’ relevant secondary school on receipt of written confirmation that the child is enrolled in that school, (as per Circular 56/2011)
- A report, including test results, (usually the STen score) will be sent to each child’s parents in mid- June to allow for parental feedback, (as per Circular 0056/2011)

- The SETs will test children who may have been absent on the day of the class test.
- Standardised Test results are recorded on Aladdin in pupil profile. Class results are recorded on Aladdin and a copy is kept in the Standardised Test results file in the principal's office
- The SET coordinator and members of the SET team analyse the results in June, in consultation with class teachers and the principal, for the purpose of allocating resources to pupils at the start of the new school year.
- Results of standardised tests are used as one measure to decide who has access to supplementary teaching, (See: "Learning-Support/Resource Education Policy"), and to inform classroom teaching.
- In this school, standardised testing is seen as a significant part of the triangulation of evidence when analysing assessment data on a whole school basis and on an individual level for the purpose of both School Self-Evaluation and for Individual Pupil Profiles.

Exemption from Standardised Testing

All pupils should be included in standardised testing, as far as possible, as a complete picture of achievements of pupils is required in an inclusive school system.

Notwithstanding the previous statement, it may be necessary on occasions to exempt a child from standardised testing. If so, a decision to exempt will be based on current guidance based on Circular 26/2019 and the guidelines from the Educational Research Centre (2009). The Educational Research Centre (2009) states that pupils may be exempt when:

- They have less than 1 year's instruction in English and limited proficiency in English;
- They have moderate to severe learning disabilities;
- They have a physical disability which prevents them from participating, (e.g. visual difficulty severe enough to prevent them from accessing the print, etc.).

Circular 26/2019 states that,

"Students may be excluded from standardised tests if, in the view of the school principal, they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the tests or, in the case of migrant students, where the level of English required in the test would make attempting the test inappropriate."

Such pupils will be determined in collaboration between class teachers, learning support / resource teachers and the principal, on a case-by-case basis. The parents of these children will always be informed of such decisions.

In other instances, certain pupils may take a lower test level from that of their class peers due to the fact that they may be following a different programme, (e.g. a child in Rang 5 following the Maths programme for Rang 3). However, for the purpose of *standardised* results, these children may complete the appropriate test level for their class standard initially and may, subsequently, complete the appropriate **lower** test level, administered by the LS / RT. Other special provisions, (e.g. extra time, short breaks during the test etc.), may be necessary for certain pupils, again to be determined through collaboration, on a case-by-case basis. This information will be recorded on the Class / Individual Pupil Results record sheet.

Screening

The following screening measures are used:

- Enrolment Form;
- Input from Parents;
- Teacher Observation;
- Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests;
- Checklists, (e.g. Dolch List of High Frequency Words);
- Teacher as Observer – Early at-risk Indicators, (Junior Infants):
 - a) Motor Development;
 - b) Perceptual Development;
 - c) Oral Language Development;
 - d) Numeracy;
- Drumcondra Primary Reading, Spelling and Mathematics Tests, administered to classes 1-6 in May / June of each year;
- The Middle Infant Screening Test, (M.I.S.T) is administered in Senior Infants (November) in order to identify children in need of Early Intervention. Results are interpreted by the class teacher and/or SET and/or principal. Parents of pupils deemed at risk will be informed at this stage. Results of screening may lead to specific interventions by the class teacher based on the staged approach. (See Learning Support Policy and Stage 1, Circular 02/05).
- The Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK) is administered by a SET in accordance with the Learning Support Policy to all children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in their first two years of schooling and as deemed necessary therein

Diagnostic Assessment (Learning Support Guidelines, Chapter 4)

List of Diagnostic tests available in Scoil Bhríde: Appendix 1.1

Diagnostic tests are used in making a detailed assessment of a child's current level of attainment and assist in devising an appropriate support programme for the child's learning.

Selection for Diagnostic Assessment

When a pupil scores at or below the 10th percentile in standardised tests, or when the class teacher has serious concerns about a child's progress, the class teacher discusses the child's attainment with his/her parents and offers that the learning support / resource teacher makes a detailed assessment of the child's current level of attainment. Written permission from parents is required for diagnostic testing. Permission slips are kept in child's pupil file. In the case of the MIST Test, the criteria as laid down in the MIST Handbook will be adhered to in the selection of pupils for possible further diagnostic testing/supplementary teaching.

The results of a diagnostic assessment are added to the child's profile on Aladdin. They may also be recorded on a support plan where appropriate. Test results are interpreted by the SET and discussed with the class teacher, learning support coordinator and parent.

Care is taken to ensure the same test is not administered to a child within the specified timeframe.

If a pupil's results show that he/she has not made expected progress and they have completed stage one and two of school intervention, they may be put forward for a psychological assessment.

Psychological assessment (Refer to Circular 02/05)

Psychological assessments arranged through the school are performed by National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Pupils in need of an assessment through NEPS are prioritised through consultation with SEN coordinator, class teacher, SET team, Principal and NEPS psychologist.

The principal will liaise with parents if it is deemed that a psychological assessment is necessary and parental consent is sought. Forms for assessments are filled out by all relevant parties.

Psychological reports are stored in individual pupil files in a filing cabinet in the principal's office. Access is controlled by the principal and SEN co-ordinator. Copies must not be made. A report is used to support a pupil's learning needs.

Parental consent is sought to forward reports if a child is transferring to a new school.

Parents may also have their child privately assessed following consultation with principal and Learning Support coordinator.

Putting a child forward for a psychological assessment

Referrals will be made to outside agencies as outlined in the "Staged Approach", (Stage III), as per "Learning Support Policy"

Success Criteria

We will know that this policy is 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.
- A range of assessments (formal and informal) are used throughout the school to enhance teaching and learning
- Parents are aware of the needs of their child

Roles and Responsibilities:

Mainstream teachers, special education teachers, the principal, the deputy principal, the special education coordinating teacher and the Board of Management all assume shared responsibilities in the area of assessment.

Specific Roles and responsibilities;

Class teacher: Regular assessment of curricular objectives in all subject areas

Maintaining accurate records of assessment in assessment file

Accurate recording of test results on pupil profile in Aladdin

Collaboration with the special education teachers in the analysis of results

Communicating test results to parents

Giving appropriate feedback to pupils

Learning support coordinator (AP1 Post)

Monitoring of the implementation of this policy,

Collaborating with class teachers, S.E.T. team and principal/deputy principal in the analysis of results,

Ordering test booklets, timetabling,

Keeping an up to date inventory of all tests,

Organising the storage of tests.

Learning Support Teacher (SET)

Collaborating with class teachers regarding assessment and the monitoring of progress

Collaborating with class teachers, other members of S.E.T. team and principal/deputy principal in the analysis of results,

Undertaking screening and diagnostic testing,

Keeping accurate records of results and communicating results to class teachers, Learning Support coordinator, parents and pupils (as appropriate)

Principal:

Overall monitoring of the implementation of this policy.

Implementation: The content of this policy will be implemented from the date of ratification by the Board of Management.

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on May 30th 2019 and will be communicated to parents via the school website.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed during the course of the 2022 / 2023 school year, as per the school's "3 Year Policy Development/Review Plan", or earlier if deemed necessary

Signed:

Chairperson

Principal

Date:

Schedule of Standardised Tests

Class	English	Maths
Senior Infants	MIST, November	Drumcondra Early Numeracy (May)
First – Sixth Class	Drumcondra English, (May) Drumcondra Spelling, (May)	Drumcondra Maths (May)

Other standardised tests administered

Non Reading Intelligence Test Rang 2 (October)

Appendix 1.2

List of Standardised Tests Available in Scoil Bhríde (This list is non-exhaustive)

English/Literacy

Drumcondra Early Literacy

Drumcondra English

Micra-T

Drumcondra Spelling

SWST - Single Word Spelling Test

MIST – Middle Infant Screening Test

BAS -British Ability Scale

Jolly Phonics Test

PSAK – Primary School Assessment Kit (English as an Additional Language)

Irish

Drumcondra Gaeilge

Numeracy

Drumcondra Early Numeracy

Drumcondra Maths

Sigma-T

Other

NRIT – Non-reading intelligence test

List of Diagnostic Tests Available in Scoil Bhríde

-English

YARC

Neale Analysis

Dyslexia Screening Kit (Pearson)

Reading Analysis

Marino

PEP3

Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA)

Maths

Malt

Other Assessments Available

English

Reading Recovery Test Battery

Toe by Toe Assessment

Maths

Mata sa Rang Assessment Battery

Operations Maths termly assessments J1 to 2nd

Busy at Maths, termly assessments 2nd to 6th

Other

Memory Test