

ASSESSMENT POLICY



TITLE OF POLICY

Assessment Policy

INTRODUCTION

The following were consulted in drawing up this policy:

- Teachers
- Board of Management
- Ancillary and support staff where appropriate

RATIONALE

We decided to focus on Special Needs in order

- to determine where child is at, what he knows
- To plan for remediation and to plan for a learning programme
- To plot long term progress
- To have a definite means of recording
- To develop a coordinated approach to assessment.

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL'S MISSION

Our mission statement

1. Scoil na mBuachaillí, Cloich na Coillte has a Catholic Ethos, promotes Irish language and culture, is caring-centred and respects different colours, creeds and intellect.
2. Every pupil is encouraged to achieve his full potential – socially, personally and intellectually – in a happy, secure learning environment.
3. The discipline in our school encourages and fosters respect and self-esteem among the pupils.
4. We endeavour to develop supportive and open communication among pupils, teachers, parents, Board of Management and the community.
5. We aim to have a staff that will continue to be committed, progressive and creative.

- Our policy has an understanding of the characteristic spirit of the school and reflects the school's ethos.

AIMS

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for Assessment

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- 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, etc.
- 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 in relation to the national average.
- 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

Assessment for learning:

The following types of informal assessment methods are used in our school:

Teacher observation

Teacher-designed tasks and tests

Work samples, portfolios and projects.

There are different assessment methods depending on age level, subject:

- **EAL:** Aural, Oral, Written and Reading tests.
- **Junior Classes:** Teacher Observation is very important when assessing Junior Classes.
- **Infants:** Bellfield Assessment Test / Informal Assessment | MIST test - aural
- **Rang 1 - Rang 6:** Micra-T and Sigma-T for English and Maths

Across the school:

- **Pupil Profiles**
- **School Reports**
- **Parent/Teacher Meetings**
- **Pupil's File** - kept in each classroom and second one in Office.

Pupil Profiles:

Samples of English, Maths, Irish, Art are taken each year just before the Parent/Teacher meetings. These are kept in the child's **Classroom File**.

School Plan Subject Areas:

The School Plan for each subject area addresses the issue of assessment.

Teacher-Designed Tasks/Tests:

- All subjects usually - some are specified below
- Maths and English also have Standardised Tests
- Literacy
- Phonics
- PE
- Spellings
- Tables
- History
- Geography
- Preparation for Entrance Exams for Rang 6
- Some testing can be informal e.g. quizzes

- A range of assessment tests are listed on the SESS website www.sess.ie
- Draft Report Cards Templates. www.ncca.ie
- info@ncca, September 2005. Issue 1, p. 8. Assessment for Learning

- Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the beginning.

Roles and Responsibility

- The entire staff of the school has responsibility for implementing this policy.
- The policy will be co-ordinated by the Principal and SDT - Mr. Tadhg O'Driscoll.

Review

- This policy will be reviewed at staff meetings and school planning meetings.

Ratification

- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.
First drawn up on June 2009 | September 2009.

Reference Section

- Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools, NCCA, 2007
- Special Educational Needs – a Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers and Resource Pack for Teachers, NEPS, 2007
- Learning Support Guidelines, DES, 2000
- Circular 0138/2006 Supporting Assessment in Primary Schools
- Circular 02/05 Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools
- Primary School Curriculum – section on assessment for each subject
- Working together to Make a Difference for Children, NEPS
- Drumcondra English Profiles. G. Shiel & R. Murphy, ERC, 2000
- Commonsense Methods for Children with Special Needs, Peter Westwood, Routledge Falmer, 1997

Pupils may be involved in assessment of their own progress:

- Correcting their own work
- Assessing their art work or evaluating their own stories or drama work
- Editing | Redrafting
- Questioning if problems arise.

Standardised tests

Micra-T (*Rang 1 - Rang 6*)

Sigma-T (*Rang 1 - Rang 6*)

Bellfield Infant Assessment Test (*Junior Infants*)

MIST Test (*Senior Infants*)

Drumcondra English and Reading Tests (occasionally used for checking) (*Rang 1 - Rang 6*)

EAL Assessment (*all classes*)

At what time(s) of year?

- Micra-T: *October 10th*
- Sigma-T: *June 10th*
- Bellfield Infant Assessment Test - *Summer Term*
- MIST Test: *February*
- EAL: *September (or when child comes to school) March*

Who is responsible for purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing?

- Principal and secretary

Who administers the standardised tests – class teacher, other class teacher, learning support teacher? – or if a child is absent and returns later

- **Bellfield Infant Assessment Test:** Infant Teacher
- **MIST Test:** Class teacher / LSRT Teacher
- **Micra-T:** Class Teacher
- **Sigma-T:** Class Teacher
- **EAL Tests:** EAL Teachers
- **If a child is absent:** it is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to ensure that the test is carried out. An LSRT Teacher may be asked to administer

this test.

Are tests appropriate for all pupils? (*International pupils, pupils with language/learning difficulties, members of the Traveller community...*)

- No, especially the Standardised Tests - but all children are required to attempt the tests.

Are there procedures in place to cater for pupils who are not taking a test with their classmates?

- Yes, these children are given the test by an LSRT Teacher, if they are absent when the test was given initially.

What results are recorded – raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN, Reading age...?

- All results are recorded. These are kept in the class file in the Office and updated after each test.

Who is involved in the analysis of results for an individual class, across a number of classes, at whole school level?

- The principal, LSRT teacher(s) and the class teacher.

How does the information gathered from tests inform teaching and learning?

- Identify areas of the curriculum for revision
- Informs planning for the year ahead and for the coming years.
- The results of these tests identify children who may be struggling, encountering specific problems or who may need extra help - e.g. Learning Support, Resource (following a Psychological Report | Occupational Therapy Report etc). These children will be monitored closely.
- For children already attending Resource | Learning Support | EAL | RTT it can identify specific areas of the subject that may need further testing.

How are results communicated to parents?

- The results are communicated (at the moment) verbally only at Parent / Teacher meetings. They may in the future be recorded in the summer report.
- The STen is given - both Age / Class. If necessary since STen can be quite broad the Percentile may also be given.

Recording the results of assessment

What is the school's format for the recording of assessment results?

- Each class has a file in the Classes' Filing Cabinet. The results of all standardised tests over the years are stored here.
- Then the results of any children who are experiencing difficulty are stored electronically in the .. Resource Folder / Allocation of pupils to teachers file.

Is there an agreed terminology used and understood by all teachers?

- By and large yes.

Are teachers made aware of the need to record comments in an objective and instructive manner?

- Yes.

What procedure has the school in place to manage sensitive data?

- All sensitive material is kept under lock and key in the principal's office.

What arrangements are in place for the transfer of appropriate information based on assessments? –

- **Teacher to pupil:** this is done in the normal way in the classroom.
- **Teacher to teacher:** A special meeting is held on the first Friday in September where teachers get an opportunity to meet and discuss pupils.
- **Teacher to parent:** Parent / Teacher meetings are held in March each year. There is also an informal open door policy where parents are welcome to call to the school to discuss their child's progress at any time. Where possible we encourage to make a prior appointment - this ensures that the teacher has adequate time to give to the parent.
- **Primary to second level school:** a meeting is held with a representative of the secondary school with the principal and the 6th class teacher each June.

Implications

- A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning.
- Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects.

If it is felt necessary to consult a psychologist (NEPS or other) about diagnostic test results, who arranges for such consultation?

- The principal in consultation with the parents, class teacher and LSRT teachers.

Are the procedures for conducting diagnostic assessments communicated to teachers, parents?

- Yes. Teachers are already familiar with the procedures, as these have been outlined at Staff Meetings.
- At the new parents meetings in October, parents are informed about the procedures involved by the Learning Support Teacher.
- Parents will be informed of the procedure again in more detail, once a decision is taken to undertake a Psychological Assessment.

Psychological Assessment: (Refer to Circular 02/05)

Who liaises with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required? **Stage 3**

- The principal
- Class teacher
- LSRT teacher

Who is responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from specialist (s)? (Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, Audiologist, other...)

- The principal
- Class teacher
- LSRT teacher

What part does the assessment play in drafting an educational plan for a pupil?

- It plays a major part in his IEP.
- The procedure for drawing up the IEP is included in the LSRT Policy.

Where are psychological reports stored and who controls access to them?

- The reports, IEPs etc are stored in the Principal's Office.
- The principal and LSRT teachers have access to them - however the files must always be returned to the office each day.

- If a child is experiencing serious difficulty, parents may be contacted and a programme drawn up e.g. Staged approach. If the Staged Approach has already been followed then inclusion in the Learning Support Programme will be considered. Parental Permission is necessary for this.

What bearing have the results on the deployment of teachers and/or the allocation of learning support/resource hours in a school ?

- Following the procedure above, children with a Percentile of 12 or less will be included in the Learning Support Programme.
- Children who get a percentile of 25 or less will be monitored and may be considered for inclusion - depending on the resources available.

Screening: (Refer to Learning Support Guidelines and Circular 02/05)

What screening tests are used to facilitate the early identification of learning strengths / difficulties?

- Micra-T (*Rang 1 - Rang 6*)
- Sigma-T (*Rang 1 - Rang 6*)
- Bellfield Infant Assessment Test (*Junior Infants*)
- MIST Test (*Senior Infants*)
- Drumcondra English and Reading Tests (occasionally used for checking) (*Rang 1 - Rang 6*)
- EAL Assessment (*all classes*)

What emphasis is placed on early intervention programmes? **Stage 1**

- In the school we run the Reading Recovery Programme and the Literacy Programme. Further details on these programmes and their administration in the LSRT Policy.

What criteria indicate that diagnostic testing is needed?

- Teacher observation
- Standardised Tests Results
- Parental concern

How are results communicated to parents?

- Parents are initially contacted by phone.
- This is usually followed up by a meeting.
- If inclusion in Learning Support Programme is envisaged, a note is then sent for permission. (Copy of this can be found on the School Website / Staff Site.

How are parents consulted if diagnostic testing is considered necessary?

- By telephone initially

Diagnostic Assessment: (Refer to Learning Support Guidelines, Chapter 4)

What formal diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties?

- Jackson Phonics*
- PAT Screening (diagnostic element)*
- Aston Index (a battery of tests)
- Bellfield Infant Screening Test
- Bangor Dyslexia Test (also available for use)
- Neale Analysis (will be available for use, due to be purchased in Summer 09)

- Sigma-T (diagnostic element)*
- MALT Diagnostic Test (also available for use)
- Quest
- Testing for Reading Recovery involves screening and diagnostic elements.

- * denotes tests agreed to be undertaken by all Learning Support | Resource | EAL | RTT teachers.

Who is involved in selecting pupils for diagnostic assessment?

- Same procedure as for selection for Learning Support.

How are parents consulted in advance?

- Parents are initially contacted by phone.

- This is usually followed up by a meeting.
- If inclusion in Learning Support Programme is envisaged, a note is then sent for permission. (Copy of this can be found on the School Website / Staff Site.

Who administers the diagnostic tests?

- Learning Support | Resource | EAL | RTT teachers.

Who interprets the results?

- Learning Support | Resource | EAL | RTT teachers.
- Principal
- Class teachers

How does the school ensure that the results of the assessments inform subsequent learning plans?

- Learning Support | Resource | EAL | RTT teachers use results to plan for their work ahead.

Following testing, what procedures are used for sharing information between teachers, parents and relevant agencies (if appropriate)?

- If necessary further meetings are arranged with parents, teachers etc.
- This will be organised by the Principal usually or by LSRT teachers/ class teachers.

What criteria are used when deciding which pupils should be referred for supplementary teaching **Stage 2**

- Following the procedures outlined above, children with a Percentile of 12 or less will be included in the Learning Support Programme.
- Children who get a percentile of 25 or less will be monitored and may be considered for inclusion - depending on the resources available.
- It may happen that a child performs badly on a particular day and this is out of character for the child (we will have all his previous results on file). In this instance an alternative test may be given e.g Drumcondra.
- Inclusion in Learning Support Programme is hopefully for short period only. Then after testing and once improvement is made the child may be released from the programme.