

Ballyfacey N.S.

18257N

Assessment Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy was formulated by the staff of Ballyfacey National School. The policy is based on advice and information provided in the Primary Curriculum, the NCCA website and the NCCA booklet Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools and Circular 0138/2006.

Rationale:

In order to ensure that all children in our school achieve to the best of their ability we believe it is imperative that any learning difficulties are identified at the earliest opportunity and that the school must put in place an appropriate response to their needs. An effective assessment policy ensures quality in education is central to this process of teaching and learning. Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short term and long term needs of the child and plans accordingly. Assessment assists communication to all parties involved in the child's education i.e. teacher and child, teacher and parent and teacher to teacher. It helps the child become more self-aware as a learner and develops powers of self-assessment. It is integral to all areas of the curriculum and to the child's growth in self-esteem and acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the school:

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective policy of assessment will identify the early interventions required to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

Aims:

Through the implementation of this policy we aim to:

- Benefit pupil learning in the school,
- Monitor learning processes,
- inform whole school decisions in relation to classes and curriculum implementation,
- to generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time,
- involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties,
- assist teachers' long and short term planning ,
- coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis in promoting collaboration among teachers.
- Effectively share information on pupils' educational progress with parents/guardians at the end of the school year and according to guidelines in Circular 0056/2011 and with transfer to secondary school or another primary school following guidelines in circular 0045/2014.

Definition of Assessment:

In line with the NCCA, our staff believe that assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is concerned with children's progress and achievement. It involves gathering information to understand how each child is progressing at school and using that information to further a child's learning. We concur with their definition of classroom with the "process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes". Assessment, therefore, involves more than testing. It is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the child that include moment-by-moment conversations, observations and actions. (NCCA, Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools. November 2007 p.7).

Purpose:

- The purpose of assessment is to inform planning for, and coverage of, all areas of the curriculum.
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils and groups of pupils.
- To contribute to the school's strategy for prevention of learning difficulties
- To monitor pupil progress and attainment
- To enable the junior and senior teachers modify their programmes to ensure that the particular learning needs of children and classes 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 the assessment of their own work
- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies.

Range of Assessment Methods used throughout the School:

Both assessment of learning and assessment for learning will be used by teachers to make professional judgements about pupil achievement/progress. Deciding what to assess will be based on the curriculum objectives in each curriculum area/subject and on what the teacher intends to help the children to learn. Each teacher will use the most appropriate assessment method to measure the extent to which children have achieved these objectives. The range of assessment methods to be used throughout the school is outlined below

Assessment for Learning:

The concept of assessment for learning (AFL) extends the potential of formative assessment. It emphasises the child's active role in his/her own learning, in that the teacher and child agree what the outcomes of the learning should be and the criteria for judging to what extent the outcomes have been achieved. In essence, AFL, helps teachers and children to focus on three key questions;

- Where are children now in their learning?
- Where are children going in their learning?
- How will children get to the next point in their learning?

Providing feedback to children is therefore central to AFL. This feedback is based on evidence of how and what the children are learning. Feedback focused on the learning or task in hand, can help children identify and celebrate their progress and achievements, pinpoint challenges they experience, and decide what the next steps should be. This level of involvement in shaping their

own learning can heighten children's awareness of themselves as learners and encourage them to take more personal responsibility for, and pride in their learning. AFL does not generally happen at the end of a particular piece of work or a period of time. It usually takes place in the day-to-day, minute-by-minute interactions between teachers and children. Everything children do, say and make – designing and making a model, working on a project, /task alone or collaboratively, playing and so on, has the potential of providing the teacher and the children themselves with information about what they do and don't understand and what they can and cannot do. Using AFL, the teacher interprets this information and uses it to support children in their work and to plan ahead. In this way, the teacher can integrate AFL into teacher –child interactions and children can come to regard it a natural part of how they learn in school. The teacher can also use information from AFL to evaluate his/her teaching. Based on information gathered from children, the teacher can make changes to his/her planning, organisational strategies, and teaching methodologies in order to make learning more successful for the children.

Informal assessment methods are used:

- Teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and tests, work samples and projects .
- Homework , parental feedback and pupil feedback are modes of assessment that apply in this school .
- Oral and written modes of assessment are designed at the discretion of the individual teachers in compiling profiles on individual pupils.
- Children themselves provide feedback on their own work and progress at it in daily contact with the teacher in the curricular areas of Maths, English and Irish. Other curricular areas are assessed informally also but less frequently.
- Portfolios, pupil self-assessment through KWL charts, questionnaires, evaluation sheets,.
- Parental & pupil feedback, observations.
- Standardised Testing.
- Diagnostic Testing.
- Assessment by Psychologist/ Occupational Therapist.

2. Assessment of Learning (AOL):

Assessment of learning (AOL) focuses more on medium and long-term assessment . AoL generally involves:

- assessing a child's learning at the end of a given period , such as the end of a unit of work , a week , a term , or a year.
- The emphasis in AoL is on measuring a child's cumulative progress towards curriculum objectives.
- A grade or a score is often the only feedback a child receives . While these results are useful to the teacher they can be of limited value to the child, unless the teacher identifies the essential information they provide about the child's progress and achievement and communicates this to the child.
- AoL helps the teacher to plan future work , to set new targets , and to provide feedback and information for end of year assessment.
- Teachers uses information from AoL for reporting, particularly to parents and other teachers.
- The NEPS psychologist may also access the information gathered through AoL in order to work with the school in meeting the learning needs of individual children.

As a school we are developing good practice in assessing learning. Results are used for;

- Selecting necessary interventions if required.
- To measure the progress of the children's learning.
- To evaluate for planning targets of class teachers and SEN teachers.
- As a guide for professional development.
- To guide the school to select target areas of various subjects for future school development planning.
- To report to parents.
- To highlight good practice and school strengths.
- To keep a clear focus on good teaching and learning.
- To inform Parents and DES of levels attained in Numeracy and Literacy.

The following are among some of the methods of informal assessment that are used in the school

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

Checklists

- Standardised tests

Pupils are encouraged to become involved in the assessment of their own work / progress.

Examples include the use of:

- Two stars and a wish.
- Peer Assessment.
- Think, pair, share.
- Self-editing / drafting / redrafting.
- Comments good / needs improvement .

The above assessment methods are used across the whole school, at the discretion of individual teachers, depending on the requirements of individual pupils, class level or subject and parents are given feedback on a regular basis.

Examples of teacher designed tasks / tests:

- Weekly spelling assessments/ tables / maths tests (Senior Classes)
- Phonics assessments- Junior end of school
- SESE review (senior classes)
- Termly assessments
- Assessments in Irish / English / Maths designed by teachers

STANDARDISED TESTS

- In Ballyfacey N.S. the standardised tests used are Micra-T and Sigma T.
- Children from First to Sixth class are tested during the Summer term.
- The standardised test is administered by the class teacher and sometimes assisted by the S.E.T. teacher in its correction.
- Each teacher will keep a record of the level of the test, raw score, standard score, sten score and percentile rank.
- Class teachers will note scores in devising groups for the following years work in the particular curricular area.

- Analysis of Scores will inform the provision of additional individual support in the classroom
- Analysis of Scores will assist our school's Early Intervention Programme (See SEN Policy)
- The NRIT will also be carried out to compare attainments in Maths and Literacy with the child's measured intelligence scores.
- Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card and are discussed at parent / teacher meetings.
- The STEN score is used to explain results to parents.
- Results are forwarded to the DES as required.
- In the event that a pupil is absent on the day of the test Support teachers can administer the test at a later date.
- Pupils may be excluded from the tests if it is the view of the SET team along with Class Teacher they have a SEN which would prevent them from taking a test.

SCREENING

- MIST Middle Infant Screening Test is used to facilitate the early identification of pupils' learning strengths and difficulties.
- Pupils in senior infants are assessed using MIST. The class teacher, with the support of the S.E.T. teacher, administer the test in their fifth term in the school.
- Class based early intervention by the class teacher is provided as additional individualised support.
- Parents are consulted about results of screening and permission sought when children need to leave the classroom for additional learning support with LS teacher.

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

- Priority for Learning Support is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 12th percentile, excluding the pupils who receive support teaching.
- In the case of pupils performing below the 10th percentile the screening process is followed by a consultative meeting between the class teacher the parents and the learning support teacher concerning the pupils performance.
- Parental consent is sought for conducting of Diagnostic Assessment. These tests are administered by the S.E.T. Teacher. A further consultative meeting then takes place to consider the outcomes of the assessments. A remediation plan is drawn up as a result.
- The class teacher and S.E.T. teacher meet to devise Individual Education Plans/ Support Plans in consultation with the Principal and parents. The pupils involved also contribute to setting their own short term targets, where appropriate.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

- If it is felt that a psychological assessment is required at a later stage the class teacher and S.E.T. teacher meet with the parents.
- The need for referral is discussed and consent sought.
- The class teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with parents and they meet the external professional in the school and the assessment is conducted.
- Such reports are stored in the school in a locked storage unit and can be accessed only by the parties concerned.

RECORDING THE RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT

- The Principal keeps further confidential reports on individuals in a locked storage unit.
- Test Results are recorded on class record sheets and these are stored according to school practices and the Data Protection Act. Access to records will be determined by school policy on record keeping and the Data Protection Act . (p95 , Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum , NCCA)
- Test results, end of year reports, copies of assessments etc. are kept in individual folders.
- All data is sensitive to each child and therefore the cabinet is kept in office.
- In line with the National Strategy to improve Literacy & Numeracy standardised test results will be given to the relevant second level school on transfer from Primary to Second Level.
- End of year assessment results will determine who will receive SET for the following year. The Results of the Standardised Tests are uploaded onto the DES website as required in June every year.

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.
- All parties have clearly defined roles and objectives. Procedures will run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects.
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers.

The achievement of these success criteria will be assessed through feedback from teachers, pupils and parents.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

Mainstream Class Teachers Special Education Teachers and the Principal assume shared responsibility. 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 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

Implementation Date

The implementation of this policy and its procedures originally took effect from the new school year September 2007.

It has been reviewed and amended frequently over the years and the most recent review of this policy took place in March 2022 and it will be reviewed again in the school year 2024-2025 unless an earlier review is deemed necessary.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

The review of this policy was ratified at the Board of Management Meeting of 14th March 2022.

Signed: Shamus O'Sale (Chairperson of B.O.M.) Date: 14th March 2022

Signed: Tomie O'Gorman (Principal) Date: 14/3/22