

Assessment & Recording Policy

Introduction

This policy was reviewed and updated following a whole-school planning in school ISM meeting on 26/04/22 and will be presented at the next staff meeting.

Policy Rationale

The core of the 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 whole school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective.

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 relative success, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aims / objectives of the policy are to:

- facilitate improved pupil learning
- create a procedure for monitoring achievement
- track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
- coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.

Principles / Purpose of Assessment.

1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment must be to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.
3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organization, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
5. We recognize the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.
6. In addition to normal assessment, opportunities are taken to record significant points in a child's development, such as: difficulties encountered and possible reasons for them.
7. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.
8. Assessment of behaviour and performance gradually builds up into a profile for each pupil over his school career. This is a working document for the use of teaching staff only. It is not an official school record. The profiles are stored in the office or on Aladdin and are available to teachers on request.
9. Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and should not be administratively burdensome.

Policy Content

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils including the exceptionally gifted so that adequate strategies are in place early enough to facilitate remediation. These strategies may include pupil self assessment, pupil profiling, two way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programmes, and student support plans. See also SEN Policy.

Formal Assessment

Further diagnostic tests are carried out throughout the year by the Learning Support Teacher on specific children as need arises. The Sigma Maths and Drumcondra English Tests are administered in November of each year to all children except those in first class and, after correction, a one-to-one meeting is held with the parents of all pupils. An alternative standardised test is administered to all first class children.

1. Informal Assessment

Homework and class work are marked and comments are made as appropriate. Marks and especially grades are not usually given. Work is ticked to indicate that the teacher has looked at it and a written comment to indicate sources of error, good points etc. will normally be made. Spelling mistakes are corrected as outlined in the school spelling policy.

2. Class work

Informal assessment is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc.

3. Homework

Homework and project work is checked both formally and informally in a routine way.

Primary to Secondary

A meeting is held each year with key staff from the local second-level schools to discuss pupils' performance in their assessment tests and to report on individual pupils. This meeting is attended by the sixth class teachers and the principal.

For pupils leaving the school, up to date records are passed on to the principal by the class teacher for forwarding to the new school.

Standardised Testing

The school administers Drumcondra Reading and Sigma T. All classes from First class upwards are tested. The tests are usually administered at the end of May by the class teacher. Sten and Percentile Rankings scores are recorded on the class Record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in the SEN Room. The SET analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Pupils in Senior Infants are assessed using the MIST test and Junior Infants are assessed using the Belfield Infant Assessment programme.

Following DES guidelines all standardized test scores will be orally given to parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher meetings and a STEN and percentile score will be written in the end of year reports.

Diagnostic Assessment

The school policy on Psychological Assessments lists all diagnostic tests used by the school. Such tests are administered by the S.E.T. 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 02/05 where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing / psychological assessment. Parents are advised of the outcome and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought, and a consent form is completed. The Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening.

The diagnostic tests used in the school include –

- Neale Analysis

Screening

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in our school are –

- Belfield Infant Assessment Programme
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)
- Sigma T (occasionally).

These tests are administered individually or on a whole class basis. The MIST and BIAP are administered on a whole class basis before Easter of each year, while the Neale Analysis is administered individually by the Learning Support teacher when deemed appropriate. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per circulars 24/03 and 02/05. Children undertaking the "Follow-On" programme after MIST testing are retested by the SEN teacher upon completion of the programme.

Psychological Assessment

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention the class teacher / Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a Psychological Assessment for their child (see Psychological Assessment policy). An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it Learning Support Resource hours or an Individual Education Plan. The most common form of assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher designed tests, 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 / end of year report. Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing. The most common types of informal teacher designed testing in our school are Maths tests, spelling tests and quizzes.

Recording

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the S.E.T. Room in a locked filing cabinet and on Aladdin. Test scores are usually stored on a class record sheet with a copy in the office and one in the class of the teacher with overall responsibility for assessment in the school. Information is passed on from teacher to teacher on a need to know basis. Children receiving extra support in school have a separate file which contains their Student Support Plan. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).

Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if –

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in staged approach
- Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined

- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Roles and Responsibilities

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.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in ____28/3/22____ and communicated to parents thereafter

References

DES Circular 02/05 – 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

www.sess.ie

Working together to make a difference for children - NEPs