Scoil Íosagáin
Assessment and Recording Policy

Introduction

This policy was drafted to coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses. The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

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

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:
   * a moment of 'breakthrough' in understanding
   * surprises and unusual reactions
   * interesting examples of strategies for mental calculation
   * 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 a locked filing cabinet in the Principal's office and the SETs' rooms 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, Individual Education Plans and IPLPs. See also SEN Policy.

Formal Assessment

The intake Second Class is assessed in September of each year. Tests used usually include the NRIT. Further diagnostic tests are carried out throughout the year by the Learning Support Teacher on specific children as need arises. The Sigma Maths and Micra English Tests are administered in May/
June of each year to all children and, after correction, a battery of diagnostic tests is then administered to pupils who have been identified as having learning difficulties.   .
These include:
- Diagnostic Reading Analysis, RAIN Sentence reading Test
- Aston Index-Vocabulary Scale
- Jackson Phonic Test
- Schonell Spelling Test

Following the testing, a one-to-one meeting is held with their parents and permission is sought to include the pupils for learning support.

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. Good work/effort may be affirmed by being chosen as 'Work of the Week' and teachers are encouraged to send pupils to the principal's office as a reward for effort and attainment.

1. **Class work**
Obviously, 'informal' assessment is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc.

2. **Homework**
Homework is checked both formally and informally in a routine way.

Completion of Project work

The completed project or notes on a topic is collected and marked. The marking recognizes excellence and indicates the areas that need improvement.

Primary to Secondary

Meetings are arranged with key staff from the local second-level schools to discuss pupils' performance in their assessment tests and to report on individual pupils. These meetings are attended by the Sixth Class teacher, members of the SET team where appropriate and the principal.

For pupils leaving the school, Education Passports are passed on to the principal of secondary schools who request them.

Stage 1. Standardised Testing

The school administers Micra T and Sigma T tests. All classes are tested. The tests are administered by the class teacher in May/June. Standard and Percentile Rankings scores are recorded on the class

Record template and stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal's office. A copy of the results is given to each class teacher at the beginning of each new school year. The SET analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September. Following DES guidelines STEN scores will be written in the end of year reports and an opportunity is given to parents to discuss these scores.

Stage 2.   Diagnostic Assessment

The school policy on Special Educational Needs lists all diagnostic tests used by the school. Such 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 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 tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in our school are –

- Diagnostic Reading Analysis
- RAIN Sentence reading Test
- Aston Index-Vocabulary Scale
- Jackson Phonic Test
- Schonell Spelling Test

Psychological Assessment

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention a psychological assessment may be considered. Depending on the availability of NEPs Educational Assessments, the SET coordinator/Principal may contact the parents for permission to secure a Psychological Assessment for their child or to suggest that the family try to access an educational assessment through a private psychological service. 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 a locked filing cabinet in the principal's office. 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 IPLP/GPLP. 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.

Implementation

This policy will be fully implemented by _____.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____ and communicated to parents thereafter.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, B.o.M.   Date : _____

Signed: _____ Principal   Date: _____

Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed in _____ years time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.