Scoil Íde National School

Assessment Policy

(updated November 2021)

Introductory Statement and Rationale

This policy was formulated by the staff of Scoil Íde N.S. The 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* and Circular 0138/2006.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Assessment activities used in this school will 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).

Aims of our Assessment Policy

- 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.

Purposes of Assessment

- To inform planning for 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 enable teachers to modify their programmes and their teaching 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 facilitate the active involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work

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 assessment 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."* Assessment, therefore, involves much 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).

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. Children who join the school (other than in Junior Infants) are assessed when they arrive in the school unless a report has been received from the previous school.

Assessment for Learning

At its heart, assessment for learning is a way of informing and involving the learners themselves in the process of assessment. The following methods of Assessment for Learning (AfL) are used in the school

- **Teacher observation**

  Teacher observation will be used to inform teaching. Where appropriate, teachers will use/develop rubrics or checklists to assist with teacher observation.

- **Teacher-designed tasks and tests**

  Teachers will refer to the Guidelines pp.54- 59 for suggestions. Also reference will be made to pp 89 – 90 where an excellent range of sample test questions is outlined.

- **Pupil Self-Assessment**

  Self-assessment is the means by which pupils take responsibility for their own learning.

Teachers can select from the following strategies to aid self-assessment as appropriate:- KWL/KWHL charts (Guidelines p. 20, 21, and 92).

- Rubrics - Guidelines pp 52 and 54.

- Evaluation sheets - (Guidelines pp 19 and 93)
- Self Evaluation Questions to facilitate reflection

- Graphic Organisers – include KWL charts Rubrics etc. (See guidelines pp.
84/85) - Learning Log

- **Completed assignments by pupils** – projects, copybooks, activities, work samples, homework
- **Parental, pupil feedback or observation**
- **Standardised tests**
- **Diagnostic tests**
- **Assessment by psychologist**

Assessment of Learning

Standardised Tests (Guidelines pp. 60 – 69)

- The following tests are used

  ➢ Literacy Lift Off for Senior Infants

  ➢ Drumcondra Reading Test – 1st to 6th classes (May/June)

  ➢ Drumcondra Spelling Test – 1st to 6th classes

  ➢ Sigma Maths – May/June, 1st to 6th

- Early Intervention in Literacy, including the Lift Off to Literacy Programme will be conducted from Infants to 1st Class. Pupils who continue to experience difficulty, despite early intervention and Stage 1 interventions by the class teacher will be offered support. The class teacher will be asked to provide recorded/written evidence of interventions adopted.
- The purpose of the standardised tests is to allow teachers to make placement and progress decisions based on assessment results and to develop appropriate interventions for certain children.
- The Principal and relevant post-holder is responsible for purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing.
- The class teacher administers the standardised tests.
- Pupils may be excluded from the tests if in the view of the Principal, class teacher and the SET they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them taking the test or in the case of newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting the test would be inappropriate. In the event that a pupil is absent on the day of the test the SET will administer the test at a later date.
- Each child's raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN and reading age is recorded.

- The results will be analysed at whole school level (using Aladdin) and at individual class level, and the information gathered from the tests will be used to inform teaching and learning.
- The STEN score will be given to parents and an explanation will be provided with each result in the end-of-year report.
- The results will determine the allocation of learning support hours in the school and the nature of the support provided (in-class or withdrawal). See Special Education Policy.

Screening

Priority will be given to pupils who score at or below STen 4 on standardized tests of achievements in Maths and English. The Continuum of Support as outlined in *Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers (DES 2007)* will be followed

Diagnostic Assessment

➢ Diagnostic tests are sometimes used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties. A list of diagnostic tests used in the school is attached as an appendix to this document. The diagnostic tests used in the school are:-

➢ Drumcondra Spelling Test

➢ Sight Vocabulary Checklist (High Frequency Words)

➢ Jackson Diagnostic Test – (not in frequent use)

➢ Wiatt – reading, language and numerical attainment(school version).

➢ The SET and the class teacher are involved in selecting children for diagnostic assessment.

➢ Should a child be identified as a candidate for assessment, specific parental permission will be requested prior to such assessment taking place

➢ The SET administers the diagnostic tests and interprets the results. If the diagnostic assessment indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial this will be arranged. In consultation with the classroom teacher, a learning programme will be drawn up.

Psychological Assessment

➢ The class teacher and learning support teacher liaise with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required. Standard consent forms are used.

➢ The Principal, SEN co-ordinator and SET , in consultation with the class teacher is responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from Psychologist, Speech &Language Therapist, Audiologist etc.

➢ Psychological reports are stored in the pupil files in the Principal's office with limited access. Refer to Data Protection Policy.

Recording the results of assessment (See guidelines p70, 71 and 79)

➢ Test results of Drumcondra and Micra standardised tests are recorded on Aladdin. Other diagnostic test results are stored in the individual child's file which is stored in a filing cabinet in the Principal's Office.

➢ Teachers have agreed terminology for reporting on children's progress and achievement based on STEN scores. Comments and observations will be recorded in an objective and instructive manner. The individual record card will be used to inform teachers of a child's assessment scores. Parents will be informed at parent teacher meetings and through the school report.

➢ Arrangements for the transfer of appropriate information based on assessments include: informal and formal P/T meetings, IEP meetings, written report at the end of year, primary to secondary school handover discussions.

➢ Assessment information will be safely stored to facilitate access to it by former pupils at any stage until their 21st birthday.

Success Criteria

➢ 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.

➢ Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of school year.

Timetable for Review

The policy will be reviewed at the end of the first year of implementation and at a minimum every 3ʳᵈ year thereafter.

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, 0013/2017

➢ 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

➢ A range of assessment tests are listed on the SESS website www.sess.ie

➢ **Draft Report Cards Templates.** www.ncca.ie

➢ **info@ncca, September 2007.** Issue 1, p. 8. Assessment for Learning

Ratification
This policy was ratified by The Board of Management on:

Date: _____

Signed: _____

This policy is due for review in two years.