

Assessment Policy of St Ailbes N.S.

Introduction:

This policy was formulated by the teaching staff in Autumn 2012 so as to have a transparent and uniform approach to assessment throughout the school. The P.D.S.T guidelines were used to assist in the drafting of this policy. This policy was revised in March 2018 based on advice in the Primary 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 The Characteristic Ethos 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. Assessment activities used in St Ailbe's will contribute to pupil learning and development by gathering information to guide each pupils further learning ie Assessment for Learning and by providing information on each pupils achievement at a given point ie Assessment of Learning. We aim to create a happy friendly inclusive secure environment where each child's potential is nurtured and valued

Aims:

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time.
- To assist teachers long and short term planning
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis and to establish a firm link between assessment and decision making with regard to future strategies, content and methodologies in the classroom
- To describe strategies for assessment of pupils over as many areas of development as possible
- To emphasise the importance of early identification of pupils with specific numeracy and literacy problems through establishing relevant baseline data which in turn can be used to monitor achievement over time.
- To ensure availability of finance to purchase texts and resources
- To outline specific strategies for monitoring the progress of all pupils with particular learning needs

Policy Content:

Purpose of Assessment

- 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 including the exceptionally able if applicable
- To monitor pupils progress and attainment
- 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 the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work where feasible

- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies

Definition of Assessment

In line with the NCCA we 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, p7

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 also 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 schools in meeting the learning needs of individual children.

As a school we are developing good practice in assessing learning. Results are used to select children 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 the BOM Parents and DES of levels attained in Numeracy and Literacy.
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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 e portfolios
- Checklists
- Standardised tests

(2) 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.

(3) Depending on the subject and the class level and the needs of individual pupils, teachers may assemble portfolios of pupil assignments, work samples, projects etc.

(4) The school's plan for each curriculum subject addresses the issue of assessment

(5) Examples of teacher designed tasks / tests

- Weekly spelling assessment Weekly table/ maths test (senior Classes)
- Phonics assessments- Junior end of school
- Weekly SESE review (senior classes)
- Termly assessment ie Ballard Test
- Assessments in Irish / English / maths designed by teachers
- Standardised tests May of each year

(6) 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
- Maths Journals
- Genre Copies
- Self-editing / drafting / redrafting
- Comments good / needs improvement
- This data will be stored in assessment folders / children's copies

Standardised Testing:

The school has alternated in recent years between Micra T, Sigma and the Drumcondra profiles. All classes from First class upwards are tested. The tests are usually administered in the last week of May or first week of June by the class teacher. Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in the administration office. The SET analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card and at parent / teacher meetings. The STEN score is used to explain results to parents. Results are forwarded to BOM and in line with SIP to parents. Results are forwarded to the DES as required. 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 Support Teachers in consultation with the class teacher and the Principal is responsible for purchase , distribution and co- ordination of testing . 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. Results are inputted into the Drumcondra Score Analysis Recording Tool.

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.

The following methods of Assessment for Learning (AFL) are used in the school sharing the learning intention /objective and devising success criteria (guidelines pp 9, 70, 77)

Following professional reflection we realise that our major emphasis to date has been on Assessment of Learning and that it is important that children reflect on and be aware of their own learning. (Assessment for Learning) We plan to ultimately teach children how to self-assess by

- (a) Setting clear learning targets / outcomes
- (b) Followed by then setting criteria to make judgements before the child commences their work
- (c) On completion by assessing their work according to the agreed criteria already set.
- (d) During 20 13 we commenced formally developing various assessment strategies as outlined in Assessment in the Primary School **Appendix A**, pages 84 - 94 and section 2, Classroom Assessment Methods pg 12-27.
Teachers can refer to Guidelines for Schools pg. 14 – 23.

Teachers will 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)

Teacher Observation

Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests

Portfolios.

Teachers select three pieces of work per child based on the three genres of writing for that year. Observations are informed by assessing the children's work at the beginning of teaching a genre and at the end. (Teacher designed checklists and prompts for examining pupils writing - writing rubrics.

E portfolios.

All class teachers are using online platforms to engage with their individual classes. Children are using these platforms to upload their homework, and also complete tasks during school time.

Success and Improvement Strategies (2 stars and a wish, think pair share.)

Effective Teacher Questioning- teachers use higher order questioning to provoke fruitful discussion. Examples may be found for schools pp 86-88 and pp 42-44

Pupil Self Assessment

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

Teachers can refer to *Guidelines for Schools* pg 14 -23.

Teachers will select from the following strategies to aid self -assessment as appropriate;

KWL/ KWKL charts (guidelines p20, 21, and 92)

Rubrics (guidelines p 52 and 54)

Evaluation Sheets (Guidelines 19 and 93)

Self Evaluation Questions to facilitate reflection.

Graphic Organisers - include KWL charts, Rubrics etc. (Guidelines p 84, 85)

Learning Log

Conferencing (guidelines pg 24- 27)

Completed assignments by pupils - projects, copybooks, activities, work samples, homework

Parental, pupil feedback or observation

Standardised Tests.

Diagnostic Tests

Assessment by Psychologist/ SLT/ O. T

Screening:

We work in accordance with the continuum of support staged approach. See SEN policy

The particular screening measures that are administered will depend on the age and stage of development of the pupils.

From the end of First Class onwards Standardised Norm Referenced Tests are used, specifically the Drumcondra English Test, Sigma T Maths Tests, Drumcondra Spelling & Drumcondra Gaeilge for 5th & 6th Class on occasion as well as 3rd and 4th classes

British Picture Vocab Test . Junior Infants to 2nd Classes . Children from Special ASD classes if appropriate.

Senior Infants / First Class Reading Recovery Assessment prior to selecting children for 1 to 1 Reading Recovery Programme in Sept. Assessment of individual child as they reach level 16.

Senior Infants may use Sigma T at the end of the year.

Jolly Phonics Assessment used for Jnr and Snr Assessments

Screening Tests used in the ASD unit include;

British Picture Vocab Test

Pathways to Independence

Graded reading level running records.

Gross motor checklist

Fine motor checklist

Cumine ,Leach and Stevenson (1998) Observation profile.

Pathways to Independence

Developing Social Skills (A. Kelly 2011)

Friendship Skills Assessment (A Kelly 2018)

The Principal, in conjunction with all staff, analyses the results of these tests. The SET teacher will then include the children in the SET timetable. The results of end of year testing are included in end of year reports.

On acceptance of SET parents sign a consent form.

Outside agencies such as HSE. Speech and Language, O.T, Psychology, Psychiatric services eg CAHLMS are consulted to advise.

IEP's developed Continuum of Support Framework. https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_resource_pack.pdf

Diagnostic Testing:

Diagnostic tests have an important role to play in identifying children with learning difficulties. The administration of such tests from Senior Infants is in keeping with the approach recommended by Circular 02/05 where a staged approach is used by individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing.

Newer and more up to date tests are being continually reviewed by the SEN team.

Class Teacher and Support Teachers select children for diagnostic assessment .

CT and SEN team meet with parents/ guardians when diagnostic testing is considered necessary

Support Teachers administer the diagnostic tests.

CT and Support Teachers collaborate to use test results to inform learning targets in pupils ' Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) or Individual Educational Programme (IEP)

CT and Support Teachers collaborate to use test results to make informed decisions regarding which children should be referred for supplementary teaching. The Principal organises consultation with Psychologist (NEPS or other) following collaboration with CT and or Support Teachers.**Special Educational Needs**

Outside Therapists

S< Assessments

OT Assessments

Physiotherapy Assessments

Play Therapy Assessments

We use guidelines from these assessments to set targets for progression of skills in an individual basis.

Psychological Assessments:

Each September a cohort of children will be identified for assessment / observation that academic year. The class teacher and / or Principal meet parents & a consent form is signed by the parents if the child is targeted for psychological assessment.

The Principal will organise the assessment.

Children who present with possible SLT / OT needs will be identified by teachers to the Principal. The Principal and / or the class teacher will advise parents re: getting a medical referral from their G.P.

The results of assessments will guide the drafting of an IEP for the pupil if appropriate. It determines the level of intervention by the SET or if an IEP is required.

The Principal will ensure that details of relevant reports are transferred with all 6th class pupils on their transfer to Second Level Education.

Recording the Results of Assessment

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 standardised test results will be given to the BOM to review overall school standards in Literacy / Numeracy at the final BOM meeting in June of each year.

The Results of the Standardized Tests are uploaded onto the DES website as required in June every year.

Assessment of Learning And Assessment For Learning

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

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.

All class teachers are responsible for maintaining their own class file with appropriate support plans for their class /classes. A locked drawer unit has been provided for each teacher in their classroom.

Implementation:

This policy supersedes the policy drawn up in Autumn 2012 and revised in January 2015 following amalgamation. This policy was revised again in March 2018 and is affective from thereon.

This policy was again revised in November 2020.

Ratification & Communication:

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

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

References:

DES Circular 02/05 - 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

www.sess.ie

Working Together to make a Difference for Children - NEPS

Appendix A: Assessment in the Primary School

Appendix B: Circular 02/05

NCCA Assessment Guidelines for Schools