



Scoil Bhríde Eglantine National School

Assessment Policy

1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:

This policy was formulated by the teaching staff of Scoil Bhríde Eglantine in consultation with the parents and Board of Management with the objective of having a transparent and unified approach to assessment throughout the school. 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.

A significant feature of the primary school curriculum is the central position given to assessment in the teaching and learning process. Using assessment strategies that are directed towards the identification of children's needs, and providing experiences that will fulfil these needs, adds enormously to the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

2. POLICY RATIONALE:

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. The reason assessment is necessary is to identify areas of strength and weakness in pupils, to monitor progress, and to predict areas of possible difficulty.

An effective assessment policy ensures quality in education and is central to the 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 to become more self-aware as a learner and develops skills of self-assessment. It is integral to all areas of the curriculum and the child's growth in self-esteem and acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

3. RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL ETHOS:

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).

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child, the enhancement of teaching processes. The successful implementation of our assessment policy would enhance every child's self-esteem, knowledge and skills and develop positive attitudes and values. An effective assessment policy is central to these core objectives.

4. AIMS OF ASSESSMENT:

- To enhance the child's learning.
- To assess and monitor the child's learning.
- To seek parental involvement and support.
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths and difficulties.
- To outline specific strategies for monitoring the progress of all pupils, whatever their learning needs, i.e. challenging more able and supporting less able students.
- To identify pupils who are excelling or struggling in a particular curricular area.
- To assist teachers in formulating desired learning outcomes in their long and short term planning.
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis.

5. PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT:

- To facilitate progress in a pupil learning.
- 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 individuals/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.

- To develop a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, this encourages further study.

6. DEFINITION OF ASSESSMENT:

In line with the NCCA, our staff believes that assessment is integral to teaching and learning and central to children's progress and achievement. It involves gathering information to understand how each child is progressing at school and using that information to further the child's learning:

'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).

7. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

The concept of assessment for learning (AFL) extends the potential of formative assessment. It emphasizes the child's active role in his/ her 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?

Assessment of Learning (AoL)

In contrast, 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.

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 are outlined below.

Assessment for each subject is mentioned in the relevant curriculum plans and in the Appendices of this Policy. Accordingly, the assessment policy will present a comprehensive overview of the strategies for assessment engaged throughout the school.

8. ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

- Assessment for learning informs teacher planning and involving the learners themselves in the process of assessment. The following methods are used in our school:
 - (i) Teacher observation – Teachers use teacher observation in line with the New Guidelines for Schools p.46-52. Each teacher will have a collection of data concerning individual pupils in the form of a folder, book, checklists, work samples, anecdotal notes, etc.
 - (ii) Teacher-designed tasks and tests - Tasks and tests can take the form of written or oral assessments. Teachers will see the guidelines pp.54-59, also pp.89-90 .
 - (iii) Portfolio assessment. – Portfolios See Guidelines p. 30 – 33. A portfolio is a collection of the child’s work, reflecting his/ her learning and development over a period of time. Each child will assemble a portfolio of best/ improved work in a variety of curricular areas. Children from 1st up will record why they have included this in their portfolio.
 - (iv) Each pupil has a SALF folder (Self-Assessment Learning Folder) to display a sample of work in a range of curriculum areas
 - (v) Success and Improvement Strategy (also referred to as ‘two stars and a wish’) - This involves children reflecting on their work and identifying two ‘best bits’/ parts they like and one area where their work can be improved. This strategy can be used orally in junior classes. This strategy may also be used when marking children’s work.
 - (vi) Effective Teacher Questioning
 - (vii) Homework assignments, project work and written class activities
 - (viii) Standardised Tests
 - (ix) Diagnostic Tests
 - (x) Parental and pupil feedback and observations
 - (xi) Conferencing with pupils enabling children to identify the next steps in their learning.
 - (xii) Assessments from outside professionals/ agencies.

- (xiii) Sharing the learning intention/ objective and devising success criteria – i.e. Telling children or eliciting from them what they are going to learn... and agreeing the criteria for judging to what extent the outcomes have been achieved (Guidelines pp9, 70 and 77)
- (xiv) Effective teacher questioning – teachers use a range of questioning according to class level.

9. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

(a) Standardised Testing

The following standardised tests are currently in use:

- MICRA-T Literacy test
- SIGMA-T Numeracy test

These tests are administered each May/June to classes from first to sixth. 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 SET team, in consultation with the class teacher and the principal is responsible for the purchase, distribution and coordination of testing.

Class teachers administer and correct the standardised tests. In the event of a pupil being absent on the day of testing, a member of the SEN team may administer the test at a later date. Each child's raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN and Reading Age are recorded. The results will be analysed at whole school level and at individual class level and the information gathered from the tests will be used to inform teaching and learning. The STEN or standard scores are communicated to the parents in the summer report and parents are referred to the NCCA website for a descriptor/explanation of the results.

The results will help determine the allocation of learning support/resource hours in the school.

(b) Screening/Diagnostic Assessment

Screening is used to initiate the staged approach to intervention as detailed in Circulars '13, '14 and '17, and in keeping with SEN Guidelines.

The SET team and class teachers administer tests and interpret results. The screening and diagnostic tests used to identify strengths and weaknesses in our pupils' learning profiles include:

Literacy:

- Early Literacy Test (Gilham)
- YARC
- Schonell reading and spelling (Aston Index)
- N.N.R.I.T. New Non-reading Intelligence Test
- Drumcondra Spelling Test
- Dyslexia Screening Test
- Young Group Reading Test
- Neale Analysis
- MIST
- Jackson Phonics Quest
- WRAT IV

Numeracy:

- Basic Number Diagnostic Test
- Drumcondra Maths Test
- Criterion-referenced tests produced by educational publishers, such as Busy at Maths assessments, Mathemagic, Maths Matters, etc.
- Sigma-T Result Analysis

Class teachers and SEN team use test results to inform learning targets in Individual Profile and Learning Programmes {IPLPs} and Individual Educational Programmes (IEPs).

Pupil Self-Assessment:

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

- KWL
- SALF Folder
- Concept Maps
- Rubrics
- Evaluation Sheets
- Self-Evaluation sheets to facilitate reflection
- Graphic Organisers
- Reflection; Representation; Reporting.
- Conferencing
- Completed assignments by pupils
- Parental, pupil feedback or observation
- Standardised Tests
- Diagnostic Tests
- Assessment by Educational Psychologist

10. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS:

If Stages 1 and 2 of the Continuum of Support (Classroom Support and School Support) do not provide adequate intervention for a pupil, parents are contacted for permission to secure an educational psychological assessment or other assessment by outside agencies for the child. Standard letters, referral and consent forms are used. SET and class teachers, principal and parents/guardians are responsible for requesting and arranging assessment by professionals such as clinical or educational psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, audiologist, etc.

SET team collaborate to use assessment results to draft an IEP for a pupil. Psychological and other professional reports are stored in a secure storage unit in designated areas with limited access.

Schools are obliged to report the standardised test results of 2nd, 4th and 6th class annually as per part 7 of curricular 0056/2011.

11. RECORDING THE RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT (see guidelines p.70, 71 & 79)

- Test results are recorded on class record sheets and pupil profiles on www.aladdinschools.ie
- Access to records will be determined by school policy with reference to the Data Protection Policy.
- Information based on assessments will be transferred appropriately. E.g. teacher to pupil; teacher to teacher; teacher to parent, primary to second level school.
- (Guidelines p.80)
- Each pupil has a file which is stored in the administration office. This file records standardised test results and end of year reports. In addition to this The Manila File is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progresses through the system. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).
- Assessment information will be safely stored to facilitate access to it by former pupils as required (In line with School Data Protection Policy).

12. EXCEPTIONAL ABILITY AND GIFTEDNESS

Children who are considered gifted may have been assessed by a psychologist and found to have a high level of intelligence (FSIQ score of >130/ 98th percentile). "Giftedness" is recognised as a disability or special education condition in the Education Act (1998). A range of strategies may be used to identify exceptionally able pupils:

- Annual standardised tests
- New NRIT

- Educational Psychological assessments
- Teacher observation
- Parental requests

Pupils who meet the criteria for exceptionally able will be catered for within the classroom based on a differentiated programme of work. These learners will be supported through the provision of challenging opportunities for extension and enrichment activities. If deemed possible by the principal, they may be offered extension classes on a withdrawal basis, subject to the approval of the pupil and their parents.

Those pupils who show exceptional talent in non-academic areas e.g. psycho-motor ability, mechanical aptitude or visual and performing arts ability will be given information regarding the relevant outside agencies. The Centre for Talented Youth in UCC has an outreach programme offering classes in philosophy, forensic psychology, archaeology, chemistry, etc. to children at weekends.

13. SUCCESS CRITERIA

- The success of our assessment policy will be judged on the basis of the following criteria:
- Roles, responsibilities and procedures are clearly defined
- There is a consistency of approach to assessment and reporting throughout the school
- Additional learning needs are identified promptly and acted on
- Overall standardised test results are monitored to ensure that high standards are maintained
- Information about pupils is transferred efficiently and confidentially from teacher to teacher at the beginning of each year
- Formal, informal, peer, self and standardised assessments form an integral part of teaching and learning at all levels
- Children's progress is reported to parents verbally and through the standardised NCCA yearly report cards
- Assessment of and for learning informs teacher planning and progression of learning.

14. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

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 when concerns arise around a child's needs. 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 and transparent.

Implementation and Ratification:

The Policy will be fully implemented by September 2021 (rollout was pushed back to 2021).

The Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 27/05/2021.

This Policy was reviewed by a staff sub-committee in 2020/2021.

The Policy is due for review on April 2023.

Signed:  (Chairperson)

Date: 27/05/21

Aoibhneas– Assessment Practices

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sight word reading • Jackson Phonics • Early Number Diagnostic • Rapid naming and Receptive listening (barrier games) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Assessing the Early Learner” checklists comprising of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information (home) • General information (school) • Social and emotional development • Gross motor skills • Fine motor skills • Oral language fluency • Emergent literacy: book knowledge • Emergent literacy: phonological/phonemic awareness • Emergent Literacy: visual perception • Emergent literacy: writing behaviours • Mathematical concepts • Number • Leading to a compilation of strengths and needs which will inform an I.E.P. • ALSO: Observations and Functional assessment form (ABC observation).
<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy/Sad face assessing written work. • Timetable – move onto next activity and completion 	

Junior / Senior Infants – Assessment Practices

JUNIOR INFANTS		SENIOR INFANTS	
ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING	ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily testing of: New sounds, blending, new topics in maths, reading and revision of ‘Bua na Cainte’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the children and assessing prior knowledge. • Teacher observing the children’s ability to: Listen, respond, attend, pay attention, sit, socialise with others, question, answer and play. • Teacher feedback in an informal manner to the children and making expectations clear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily testing of: New sounds, blending, new topics in maths, reading and revision of ‘Bua na Cainte’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the children and assessing prior knowledge. • Teacher observing the children’s ability to: Listen, respond, attend, pay attention, sit, socialise with others, question, answer and play. • Teacher feedback in an informal manner to the children and making expectations clear.
<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children choose their favourite painting to be added to portfolio. • The children circle their best letter formation. • The children use thumbs up/thumbs down. 		<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children choose their favourite painting to be added to portfolio. • The children circle their best letter formation. • The children use thumbs up/thumbs down. 	

1st / 2nd Class – Assessment Practices

1 ST CLASS		2 ND CLASS	
ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING	ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of topic Maths assessments • Measúnú – Bua na Cainte – Téamaí • Tasc Tuisceana – cluichí agus deir ó grádaigh • Readers – pre and post-test of new words • Teacher Observation • Questioning • Peer Assessment – TAG • Individual whiteboards • Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of individual pupil folder including any existing psychological assessments. • Review of the handover document from previous class teacher. • Readers – pre-test of new words • Phonics – all initial sounds and diagraphs • Phonics – phonetic blending revision sheet • Written assessment – write about yourself • Teacher observation • Think Pair Share • Conferencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil profile/Handover documents • Effective questioning • Reading Log • Survey/ Questionnaire • Spelling test • Tables test • Teacher designed tests • Quiz • Wordlist/checklist • Drumcondra Spelling/Reading Test • Drumcondra Maths Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation • Teacher designed assessment • Pupil profile/Handover documents • Think-pair-share • KWL • Effective questioning • Sharing learning objectives • SALF • Reading Log • Survey/ Questionnaire
<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thumbs up; Thumbs down • Emoji face at end of lesson 		<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thumbs up/thumbs down • Smiley face • Stars – put a star on your best work. • Art – Look and respond • Music – Listen and respond • Fist to five - Reading 	

3rd / 4th Class – Assessment Practices

3 RD CLASS		4 TH CLASS	
ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING	ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly spelling test English • Weekly Maths test • Drumcondra Spelling Test • Oral Reading Assessment Béarla agus Gaeilge • Comprehension questions – Béarla agus Gaeilge • Cloze procedures – Béarla agus Gaeilge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All about me – my strengths and challenges • Editing written work – spellcheck and punctuation • Look, Cover, Write, Check – strategy for spellings/ litriú 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Spelling tests • Irish Spelling tests • Division/ Multiplication Tables test • End of topic – Subtraction and Addition Maths test • Measúnú – Bua na Cainte – Téamaí • Tasc Tuisceana – frásaí agus fóclóir nua • Teacher Observation • Questioning • Peer Assessment – 2 stars and a wish • Individual Whiteboards • Drumcondra Diagnostic Spelling Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of individual pupil folder including any existing psychological assessments. • Review of the handover document from previous 3rd class teacher. • Written assessment of 3rd class Maths curriculum to include all strands and strand units. • Written assessment of 3rd class English skills – comprehension; grammar and writing. • Teacher observation • Analysis of 3rd class Maths assessments assigned by their previous 3rd class teacher. • Think Pair Share • Conferencing • Sharing learning objectives with the class
<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic light system • Active listening/good speaking • Art – look and respond 		<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thumbs up; Thumbs down 	

5th / 6th Class – Assessment Practices

5 TH CLASS		6 TH CLASS	
ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING	ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Spelling test • Weekly Maths test • Weekly Gaeilge Test • End of topic assessments • Individual whiteboards • Drumcondra Spelling Test • Drumcondra Reading Test • Drumcondra Maths Test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation • Teacher designed tasks and tests • Effective teacher questioning • Pupil feedback through marking • Peer assessment • Think, Pair, Share • Individual Whiteboards • Quizzes (w/multiple choice answers) • KWL tables • Exit cards • Homework assignments & project work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer assessment of written tasks • Checklists for written procedures – narrative/procedural etc. • Use of video for assessment – Gaeilge and English – The children record one another reading English and Irish work. • SALF folders used across curriculum and continued on from fifth class. • Termly assessment – Irish, English, Maths and SESE. • Busy at Maths Assessment Booklet • Weekly spelling, Maths and Irish grammar assessment • Weekly class quiz of SESE topics • Homework correcting and projects • Pupil feedback daily through use of varying levels of questioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KWL • Think – pair- share • Teacher Observation • Effective teacher questioning • Individual whiteboards • Teacher designed tasks • Peer assessment • Project work presentations
<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic light system • Thumbs up/Thumbs down • Two stars and a wish • Fist to Five – to assess topic 		<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thumbs up/ thumbs down • Self-correcting of work / tasks and tests 	