



St. Patrick's N.S,
Bruree,
Co. Limerick

St. Patrick's N.S.

Assessment Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was developed in response to Circular 0056/2011 in consultation with all staff members. Following a review by staff it was felt that the school's assessment policy was in need of updating to bring it in line with current practice in the school.

Policy's relationship to school's mission statement and ethos

At St. Patrick's N.S. we promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child. We aim to enable each child to reach their full potential. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

Policy Rationale

At St. Patrick's N.S. we aim to maintain high standards of teaching and learning, thus enabling each child to reach the highest level of their own ability. Assessment is part of good teaching and learning. It is a fundamental tool in identifying a child's learning strengths and learning needs. 'Gathering evidence about how well students are learning, and using this information to improve the learning opportunities provided for them are essential elements in ensuring that each student makes good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills.' (Literacy and numeracy for Learning and Life: 2011). The aim of this policy is to formalise existing good practices in the school and to implement new assessment procedures as outlined by the DES in Circular 0056/2011.

Aims

The aims of assessment are as follows:

- To monitor learning processes
- To benefit pupil learning
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths/needs
- To assist teachers long and short term planning
- To identify children who are entitled to Support teaching hours.
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole-school basis

- To encourage the pupils to self-assess their work and their abilities regularly.
- To encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning and to become more independent learners.

Purposes of Assessment

Each form of assessment will enable teachers to:

- Inform and plan for all areas of the curriculum
- Gather and interpret data at individual, class and whole-school level, and in relation to class and national norms
- Identify particular learning needs of pupils ranging across all levels of ability (including gifted and talented children)
- Contribute to the school's strategy for prevention of learning difficulties
- Contribute to the school's strategy for maintaining high standards in and/or improving Literacy and Numeracy
- Monitor pupil progress and attainment
- Modify their programmes in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- Compile records of individual pupil's progress and attainment
- Facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupil in assessment of their own work

Forms of assessment

In St. Patrick's N.S. we maintain a balanced combination of *Assessment for Learning* and *Assessment of Learning*.

Assessment for learning takes place when the teacher shares information about the child's learning with the child and when the teacher uses this information to plan the next steps in their teaching and in the student's learning.

Assessment of learning is used to provide a summary of what the student has achieved at fixed points, such as at the end of a period of study, or when a unit of work is completed, or at the end of an academic year. Information from assessment of learning can be used to report to others, such as parents and other teachers.

Methods of Assessment

At St. Patrick's N.S. we use a wide range of formal and informal assessment methods:

1. Teacher Observation

This involves assessing the child's progress by observing, questioning and monitoring the child's progress in all areas of the curriculum. This may include the children's responses, participation, interaction and reaction in class. Teachers may use checklists, rubric or pupil trackers to help them with their observations.

2. Teacher designed tasks and tests

Teachers use a range of activities to assess the progress of individuals or groups across the full range of curriculum subjects. These may be oral, pictorial, written or practical and may be embedded in the everyday teaching and learning activities in the class or may be used by the teacher in key areas at the end of the topics/ activities to provide a fuller picture of the child's performance and progress for example spelling tests, table tests, and SESE tests. Teachers will refer to Assessment in the Primary School Guidelines Pgs. 54-59 for suggestions.

3. Concept Mapping

These are used to gather information as a visual representation about the children's ideas and understanding in subject areas for example English SESE. As an assessment tool it provides evidence of changes in children's thinking over time e.g. before and after assessment of a topic.

4. Self –Assessment

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

- **Teachers can refer to Guidelines for Schools pp14 – 23.**

Teachers can select from the following strategies to aid self-assessment as appropriate –

- KWL/KWHL charts (Guidelines p. 20, 21, and 92).
 - What do you know about.....? (Assessment of current knowledge to inform teaching activities and learning goals)
 - What would you like to know about.....?
 - How could we find out about.....?
 - What have you learned about.....? How did you learn this?
(Assessment of what has been learned and skills developed)
- Concept maps - Guidelines pp 36 – 41
- Evaluation sheets - (Guidelines pp 19 and 93)
- What have you been learning about in?
- List three things you learned about this topic....
- Were you a good team member? Give a reason for your answer.
- What could your team do better next time?
- Teacher comment....

5. Work samples, Portfolios and Projects

Some examples of children's work are retained where possible to monitor the child's progress in knowledge and skills e.g. portfolio work, projects, samples of work done on computer, digital images of artwork. Each class teacher keeps an Individual Pupil File containing teacher observations, checklists and samples of children's work. In some classes each child selects 5-8 pieces of work per term that they are proud of or that they feel represent significant improvement. Children may record why they are proud of each piece and why they have included it in their portfolio. In some classes digital or E-portfolios may be used to store pupils work and to give a guide as to how pupils work is progressing over the year.

6. Effective teacher questioning.

Teachers use higher order questioning to provoke fruitful discussion. Examples of higher order questions may be found in the Guidelines for schools Pgs. 86-88. Examples include;

- Giving a range of answers. You need to give two definite 'yes' answers, two definite 'no' answers and one or two 'maybe' answers. E.g. which of these activities are in themselves aerobic? Golf; swimming; darts; table-tennis, sky-diving; cycling.
- A statement (e.g. instead of asking 'what drugs are bad for you?' state 'All drugs are bad for you. Do you agree or disagree and why?)
- Right and wrong – two examples/pictures, one 'right' (e.g. a healthy meal on a plate) and one 'wrong' (a junk food meal) and asking children to discuss.
- Give the answer – and ask how it was arrived at.
- An opposing standpoint – e.g. what would a mother whose children were starving think of shoplifting?
- Individual oral feedback – to include enabling children identify the next steps in their learning.

7. Success and Improvement Strategy (also referred to as 'two stars and a wish').

8. Sharing the learning intention/objective and devising success criteria - i.e., Telling children 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).

- We are learning to (WALT)
- We will know when we've achieved this because.
- What I'm looking to (WILF)

The learning objective(s) and the success criteria may be displayed on a chart/whiteboard/post it notes etc.).

9. Use of ICT.

ICT is used in certain classes to help with formative assessment. The school has recently introduced the G Suite range of apps to the school and apps such as Google Forms may be used in the future to help with assessment. Pupils are also given the opportunity to produce presentations using Google Slides and PowerPoint in some classes and this type of assessment may be used with pairs or small groups. In some classes Class Dojo is used to display pupils work in a digital portfolio.

Pupils are also given the opportunity to type their writing in English and Irish for display and for their assessment folders using the school laptops.

Screening

We use the **GL Baseline Assessment** to give the class teacher an early indication of pupil attainment.

The **Middle Infant Screening test (MIST)** is administered in the spring term of senior infants by the Infant teacher. Children are considered to be at risk if the score below the cut off points in three or more of the sub tests. If children are identified as scoring below the cut off points the class teacher will conference with the learning support teacher and follow the guidelines outlined in our learning support policy.

The **CAT** test is administered in third class by the class teacher and support teachers to aid with assessment of students' abilities.

Literacy Power Hour Pre and Post Test- Prior to commencing a block of literacy intervention through the LLO initiative the children will be pre-tested using the PM benchmark kit to ascertain the correct level for them to begin with. Children will also be tested after their block of Literacy Power Hour to check on their progress with the initiative.

In some cases, support teachers may decide to use the **GL Dyslexia and Dyscalculia** screening tests with individual pupils when appropriate.

Standardised Tests

Standardised testing is used as an assessment tool in St. Patrick's N.S. These tests are instrumental in maintaining the high standards of Literacy and Numeracy in our school. The following standardised tests are used in St. Patrick's N.S.

MICRA – T

SIGMA – T

Both tests are administered annually in the third term

- In St. Patrick's N.S. standardised tests are administered to classes 1st to 6th
- Children with learning or physical disabilities, children who have English as an additional language and children who are in receipt of resource hours may be exempt from standardised testing at the discretion of the principal.
- In accordance with DES guidelines, STEN scores are communicated to parents in the form of a written report in sufficient time before the school closure for the summer vacation to allow parents a reasonable opportunity to seek meetings with Principal and /or teacher(s) to discuss the written report if necessary.
- Results from standardised testing are reported to the Board of Management on an annual basis.
- Aggregated results of standardised testing in literacy and mathematics from classes 2nd, 4th and 6th are reported to the DES annually.
- Results are recorded digitally on the office computer. Aggregated data is then analysed by the principal, class teacher and support teachers.
- The results of standardised tests are used by teachers to inform future teaching and learning.

Diagnostic Assessment

The staged model of intervention is used in St. Patrick's N.S.

After consultation with the class teacher where an individual child/ children's scores fall below the 12th percentile (pupils under this cut off point are given priority) and with the consent of the parents, a support teacher will administer initial diagnostic assessment. At this point, the classroom teacher would have opened a class support file for the pupil. These results will be recorded in a support plan which is drawn up for the child.

The following diagnostic assessments may be used in St. Patrick's N.S.

- Belfield Infant Assessment Profiles
- Schonell Spelling test
- Schonell Word Test
- YARC
- Quest tests
- Jackson Phonic Test
- RAIN sentence reading test
- Dolch first 100 words
- Dolch second one hundred words
- Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive abilities
- NARA
- CAT test
- Lexion Assessment

- Visual Stress Test
- Sound Linkage Assessment Test

After diagnostic assessment and a complete instructional term of Learning Support, each child's IEP will be reviewed. If there are any serious concerns expressed by the parents, LS teacher and/or class teacher, further psychological assessment will be explored if required. The LS teacher and class teacher will seek the advice of the Psychological Services and discuss test results and concerns about the pupil. Based on the advice received, the application for a full assessment, if required will be completed by the LS and class teacher.

Recording Results of Assessment

- The results of each individual child's standardised test are recorded yearly as part of the child's individual Pupil Profile. The pupil's profiles are kept securely in the school.
- Children's records are held in the school until they reach their 21st birthday. (NCCA Assessment Guidelines 2007)

Success Criteria

This policy will be considered successful if:

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach to intervention
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- Assessment is used as a tool within the school to maximise pupil potential and success

References

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life (0056/2011)

Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools (2007) www.sess.ie

Consultation

A draft of this policy, when approved by the Board of Management will be made available to parents and submissions may be made through the Principal. This policy is now available to view on the school website.

Ratification and Communication

This policy will be communicated to all teachers, parents and Board of Management.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's N.S. on

Date:

Signed:

Review

This policy will be reviewed in conjunction with our School Improvement Plan.