

ASSESSMENT POLICY

“Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a pupil’s progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes”

(Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools, 2007)

Introduction

This policy was drawn up with full collaboration of all members of the staff within the context of the Revised Primary School Curriculum, the Education Act of 1998 (Article 22), DES circular 01/338/2006 and the NCCA Guidelines, 2007.

St. Fiachra’s S.N.S. considers assessment to be an integral part of teaching and learning.

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1. Rationale:

- To review the existing policy for assessment in our school
- To benefit teaching and learning in our school
- To ensure that our approach in St. Fiachra’s S.N.S. reflects current educational practice
- To inform and enhance the teaching and learning process
- To set out the use and purpose of standardised testing in the school

2. Aims of Assessment Policy

Our school aims to:

- Evaluate pupil learning
- Monitor learning processes
- Generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- Involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths, styles or difficulties
- Assist teachers’ long and short term planning
- Co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis
- Establish baseline data for newly enrolled pupils

3. Purposes of Assessment

In St. Fiachra’s S.N.S. the motivation for assessment is:

- To gather and interpret data at individual, class and whole school level
- To compare individual pupils’ data to class and national norms
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils and groups of pupils
- To contribute to the school strategy for the assessment of learning difficulties
- To monitor and compile records of pupils’ progress and attainment
- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils’ development, progress and learning needs
- To facilitate the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work
- To enable teachers to monitor and modify their planning in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- To inform the School Improvement Plan

4. Functions of Assessment

There are four functions of assessment which include formative, evaluative, summative and informative:

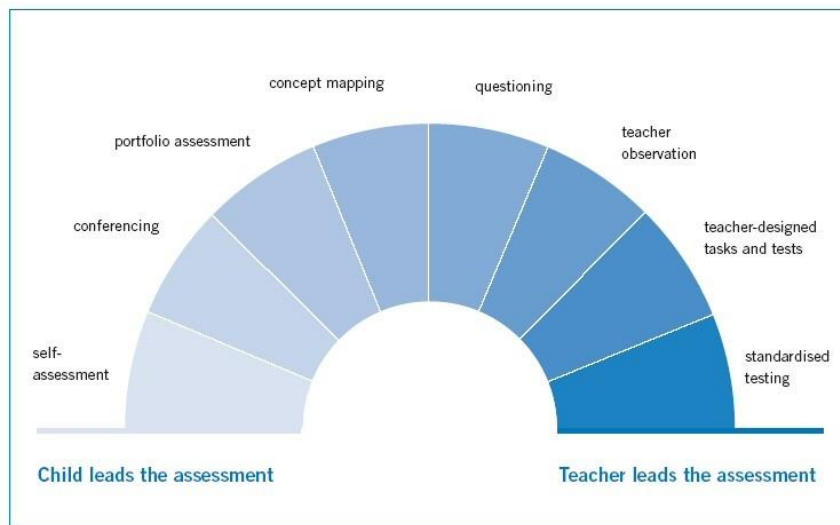
- Formative: Helps the pupils in the process of learning.
- Evaluative: Helps the teacher to evaluate the learning activities provided. Pupils are also involved in assessing their own work.
- Summative: Provides information for reports and school records.
- Informative: Provides information for parents and for the pupil’s next teacher.

5. Approaches to Assessment

<i>Assessment for Learning (A.f.L.)</i>	<i>Assessment of Learning (A.o.L.)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ongoing process of recognising and responding to the pupil’s learning in order to enhance his/her development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves assessing a pupil’s learning at the end of a given instructional period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil-centred and pupil-directed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-led
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal is to enable learners to further their own learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal is to establish levels of attainment

6. Continuum of Assessment

St. Fiachra’s S.N.S. believes that assessment is an integral element of the teaching and learning process. We employ a wide variety of assessment strategies that are based on the Continuum of Assessment.



(Taken from NCCA Assessment Guidelines, 2007)

Assessment Practices

- Assessment practices in St. Fiachra’s S.N.S. incorporate some or all of the following approaches:

Assessment approach	What we use	When it happens
Standardised testing (see further explanation below)	Non-reading Intelligence Test (N.R.I.T.)	First term with 3 rd Class and newly enrolled pupils
	Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (DPMT) Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (DPRT)	3 rd - 6 th May of each year
	Ballard and Westwood Timed Table Test	End of each term
Teacher-designed tasks and tests	Pre-tests Summative tests	Ongoing
Teacher Observation	Use of mini-whiteboards (Active Student Responding)	Ongoing
	Work samples (use of copies)	
Questioning	Teacher questioning Peer questioning	Ongoing
Portfolio Copybook Hardback Notebook	Examples of work at different stages of development	Ongoing
	Project work	
	Work samples	
	Concept/mind mapping	
	Reflective logs and journals	
Conferencing	Teacher-led conferences	Ongoing
	Pupil-led conferences	
Self-assessment (Active Student Responding)	Thumbs up, thumbs down	Ongoing
	Traffic lights system	

	Two stars and a wish	
	Smiley faces	
	Journals	
	Find and fix (error-analysis)	
	K.W.L. chart (What I know, what I want to know, what I learned)	
	Sharing learning intention: W.A.L.T. / Learning Outcome	
	Sharing success criteria: W.I.L.F. / Success Criteria	

7. Use of Standardised Testing

We are cognisant of the value of standardised testing in order to establish pupil attainment in Mathematics and English reading.

Standardised testing allows us:

- To compare pupils’ achievements with national norms
- To monitor pupils’ performance in Mathematics and English reading
- To identify strengths and weaknesses in the school approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy
- To inform teaching strategies in literacy and numeracy
- To alert teachers to pupils’ difficulties in either literacy or numeracy
- To provide a nationally agreed method of reporting to parents of their pupils’ progress in the area of literacy and numeracy

Implementation of Standardised Testing

The school administers standardised tests in both English and Mathematics in May each year. The Drumcondra Primary Reading and Drumcondra Primary Maths tests are administered to all class groups. The Special Education Co-ordinator is responsible for the purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing and for secure storage of test materials and booklets. The results of standardised tests are used to inform parents of pupils’ progress and to assist in the identification of pupils that may require support. Results of standardised tests are communicated to parents in written form with the annual school report. Class teachers administer the tests in accordance with the guidelines given in the testing manuals. Exemption from standardised testing is considered when deemed necessary (c.f. circular 0138/2006). Raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STen and reading age are recorded electronically and manually. The principal, SETs and classroom teachers are involved in the analysis of standardised results for an individual pupil, class and at whole school level. The school offers special education teaching to pupils in accordance with our Inclusive and Special Education policy.

8. Assessment at School Support and School Support Plus Level

- a) Screening
- b) Diagnostic testing

a) Screening

The following screening tests are in use;

- Standardised tests as above
- Non-reading intelligence test (N.R.I.T.)
- Non-verbal intelligence test (N.V.R.T)
- Spar Spelling Test
- Spar Reading Test

The school’s Inclusive and Special Education policy outlines the procedures involved in the administration of these tests, interpreting results and communication with parents.

b) Diagnostic Testing

The following diagnostic tests are in use:

- W.R.A.T.
- Neale Analysis of Reading Ability
- PM Reading Assessment Kit
- Alpha to Omega

8. Enlisting the support of outside agencies

If there are serious concerns expressed by the parents, Special Education Teachers and class teacher, support from an outside agency will be sought which may include a formal assessment.

9. Recording Results of Assessment

The results of each pupil’s standardised tests are recorded manually and electronically and copies sent to the principal and SETs. Results are communicated to parents along with the annual school report. An explanatory note is included, outlining the interpretation guidelines for parents.

When transferring to secondary school, parents are encouraged to pass on any relevant documentation and any further relevant information is communicated orally from school to school on request. The written consent of parents for the transfer of documents and records to authorised personnel is always sought.

10. Maintenance of Records

Each pupil’s test results are reported in writing to parents on the annual report card in June each year. The results of standardised tests are maintained carefully by the school and are available for inspection by D.E.S. officials. Pupil records are held in school until the pupil reaches the age of 25. These records are stored securely under the direction of the school principal.

11. Success Criteria of the Policy

This policy will be successful when:

- All of the staff are familiar with and implement the procedures outlined
- All of the staff understand and recognise their responsibilities and carry out the assessment of pupil’s work continually
- The transfer of assessment data between teachers is systematic and efficient

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The principal, deputy principal, class teachers and special education teachers will have responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

13. Implementation & Review

The policy will be first implemented in the academic year 2018/2019 and the review date will be May 2021.

14. Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the B.O.M. on October 15th 2018.