

ASSESSMENT POLICY
FOR
ST. MALACHY'S P.S. &
NURSERY UNIT
CAMLOUGH



ST. MALACHY'S ASSESSMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

- We believe that effective assessment provides information to improve teaching and learning. To do this in our school we undertake two different but complementary types of assessment: *assessment for learning* and *assessment of learning*.
- *Assessment for learning* (formative assessment) involves the use of assessment in the classroom to improve achievement. It is based on the concept that pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim, and how they can achieve this aim.
- *Assessment of learning* (summative assessment) involves judging pupils' performance against national standards. Teachers may make these judgements at the end of a unit of work, of a year, or of a key stage. Test results, too, describe pupil performance, in terms of levels or stanine bands.
- We give our children regular feedback on their learning so that they understand what it is that they need to improve upon. Research has shown that their involvement in the review process raises standards, and that it empowers pupils to take action towards improving their performance.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of assessment in our school are:

- To enable our children to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in their work.
- To help our children recognise the standards to aim for, and to understand what they need to do next to improve their work.
- To allow teachers to plan work that accurately reflects the needs of each child.
- To provide regular information for parents that enable them to support their child's learning.
- To provide the principal and governors with information that allows them to make judgements about the effectiveness of the school.

FORMATIVE STRATEGIES

In St.Malachy's P.S we actively support the AFL strategies. Staff have, and will continue to develop, knowledge of a wide range of strategies to promote and implement formative assessment into the learning and teaching process. These strategies include:

- **Planning** - In planning children's learning it is important to start from an understanding of what the children know already and what the children then need to know.
- **Sharing learning intentions and success criteria** - sharing what we want children to learn and how they will know that they have succeeded.
- **Questioning** - through questioning, teachers can clarify what learning has taken place and establish what difficulties are being experienced. Questions need to be open and children given thinking time before being expected to respond.
- **Feedback** - a vital process. It lets the children know what they are doing well in and should provide them with strategies to know how to improve.
- **Marking** - marking less frequently, but in more detail (2 stars and a wish) gives the children most useful feedback and is an effective way of improving performance. Time to follow up on the comments is essential.
- **Self and peer assessment** - if children are allowed to monitor their own progress against goals set they become more aware of how they learn and so become better learners.

- **Self-esteem** - the most significant in being a successful learner. Involving children in the learning and teaching process raises self-esteem.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

In St.Malachy's P.S we acknowledge that there is still a place for the end of unit assessment. These provide valuable information to teachers, pupils and parents on what knowledge and skills have been attained.

The strategies adopted include:

- **End of Unit Assessment** - to provide an indication of what knowledge has been retained from the teaching block just completed.
- **Weekly tests** - in areas such as spelling and mental maths, where teachers wish to check if patterns have been understood.
- **Standardised tests** - in Literacy (PIE/PTE and SWST) and Numeracy (PIM/PTM) between P.3 and P.7. Group Record Test sheets are completed for PIE/PTE and PIM/PTM to identify areas of strength and development in each class and incorporated into SDP. CATS are completed in P.4 & P.6 (January time) and used to identify those children that are: (a) underachieving; (b) more able; and (c) working according to their ability.
- **End of Key Stage Assessment** - We set targets in Numeracy and Literacy in P.4 and P.7 in October based on (a) NFER diagnostic tests completed in September and (b) professional judgement. We review these in June when appropriate levels are given to each pupil using the level descriptors. From this we benchmark with other schools of similar FSM and identify which quartile St.Malachy's P.S is in. We also compare our % of results to N.I average and identify areas of strength and

development. Literacy, Numeracy, SENCO and underachievement co-ordinators are made aware of these. Parents are informed of these results in the June Annual Report, incorporating the percentage breakdown of overall classes.

- **Target Setting** - As mentioned earlier NFER tests are completed in September to set targets for P.4-P.7. In December P.1 - P.3 set baseline targets using Book Banding, which begin in January. All targets are reviewed in June and P.4-P.7 targets measured against the 60% and 23% guidelines.
- **Analysis of Data** - P.3 - P.7 teachers are given the opportunity to complete a data analysis sheet (updated in April 2016) for their class and include information, where relevant, about pupils. From this sheet the more able and underachieving children are selected for the new academic year. Key co-ordinators are given copies of all analysis sheets.
- **Intervention Groups** - NFER test results in third term are used to analyse effectiveness of the various intervention groups using the group format on SIMS. SMT meet in June to select children who will be attending the AST (if available) in Term 1. Term 2 children will be selected at the end of November and Term 3 children selected before Easter.

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Mist (P2) & NFER (P.3-P.7) - These tests are used to gain evidence of a specific area(s) of weakness and help the teacher to provide a teaching programme for the child.

A pupil may also undergo an assessment in foundation stage because the teacher or parent has a concern about a particular area not progressing as expected. BPVS test would be used. Parents of children who under perform in Mist are eligible for 'Forward Together Programme.' When finished, P.2 children are re-tested to identify progress or any further areas of weakness.

OBSERVATIONS

In the Nursery Stage there are daily/spontaneous observations and Specific Observations based on the six areas of learning. These observations will formulate the basis of a written report with input, where necessary, from Educational Psychologists and Speech & Language Therapists. This report is shown to parents and the Foundation stage teachers that the children will be going to in September. Foundation stage on-going assessment will be based mainly on teacher and classroom assistants' observation which will inform the learning programme for each child. A new agreed baseline for Nursery and Foundation Stage was agreed in Term 1 of 2015.

ASSESSMENT MANAGER

Standardised tests, Mist and End Of Key Stage results are all entered onto Assessment Manager. All teachers have access to this programme. These results enable teachers to identify what level pupils are performing at and also those pupils who are under or over achieving. It allows teachers and subject leaders to track pupils and identify those children that should receive intervention; e.g. 'Underachievers' or 'More able.'

ASSESSMENT FOLDERS

All test results will be kept in one folder. At the end of June teachers will meet with the teacher of the class they are receiving in September and information contained in the folder will be discussed. New format sheet for teachers to use was created in June 2016.

SMT

The SMT will monitor the effectiveness of the policy

- Classroom visits, both formal and informal.
- Discussing with pupils what they are doing and why they are doing it.
- Reviewing specific learning and teaching approaches.
- Monitoring and commenting on plans submitted on a six weekly basis.
- Consultation meetings with individual teachers.
- Pupil tracking of achievement and attainment.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT AND WHO IT IS FOR?

Teachers will know:

- Where are the pupils starting from?
- Has the class, overall, learned what was planned?
- Are all the pupils making expected progress?
- Are they making expected progress against national expectations?
- How are pupils applying their skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum?
- Which pupils need more help and support and in which areas?
- Which pupils need work above the average group?
- Is the planning for activities, resources and staffing well targeted?

Principal and subject leaders will know:

- Are the pupils making progress?
- Are there any major problems?
- How does their performance compare with those in other years?
- Is the pupils' progress in line with the School's targets?
- How does the St.Malachy's compare with other similar schools?
- What aspects of the curriculum and teaching need to be strengthened and addressed in the School Development Plan?

Parents will know:

- Is my child making good progress?
- Are there any major problems?
- How is my child doing compared with others of the same age?
- How is my child doing compared to their CAT score?

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING TO PARENTS

Assessment is an integral part of the N.I. Curriculum. The main objectives of Assessment are to underpin and inform teaching, and to establish what each child (a) knows (b) can do (c) understands. Class teachers assess children in different ways for example by continuous assessment, oral practical and written tests.

Reporting to Parents

Parent/teacher consultation (Nursery-P7) – Autumn term

Termly I.E.P. Interviews (SEN)

Annual Report of the Board of Governors

February interview with Principal for parents of those pupils transferring

Parent/teacher consultation by appointment when concerns arise

Written reports (N-P7) - June

Class	Type of Assessment	Time of Assessment	Reporting to parents
P1	Tracking children through the FS	Ongoing throughout year	Nov P/T Meetings June written report IEP reviews
P2	Tracking children through the FS MIST Screening	Ongoing throughout year April	Nov P/T Meetings June written report IEP reviews
P3	Teacher observation Quest screening Standardised test - Maths - English	Ongoing November April/May	Nov P/T Meetings June written reports IEP reviews
P4	Teacher observation Baseline Standardised Tests - Maths - English CATs 4	Ongoing October April/May January	Nov P/T Meetings June written reports IEP reviews
P5	Teacher observation Baseline Standardised tests - Maths - English	Ongoing October April/May	Nov P/T Meeting June written reports IEP reviews
P6	Teacher observation Baseline Standardised test - Maths - English CATs 4	Ongoing October April/May January	Nov P/T Meetings June written reports IEP reviews
P7	Teacher observation Baseline Standardised Tests - Maths -English	Ongoing October April/May	Nov P/T Meetings Feb - Transfer Meeting June written reports IEP reviews
	Standardised Tests	Single Word Spelling Test NFER Progress Test in Maths BPVS NFER Progress Test in English	

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