

	Scoil Naisiúnta Rónáin Naofa Cluain Lua
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Assessment Policy

Introduction

This policy was formulated by the staff at St.Ronans N.S in January 2023. The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 2nd February 2023.

Policy Rationale

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. Assessment is ongoing and is vital for the continued progress and development of the children in our care, to ensure that each child is enabled to reach his/her full potential. This policy endeavours to identify at the earliest possible opportunity, children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a whole school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective.

Relationship to School Ethos

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of teaching processes. The child is central to this policy and the essence of this policy is that children are encouraged and supported in their development to their full potential and also that the talents of each child are recognised and celebrated across a broad spectrum of curricular areas. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that relative success, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aims / objectives of the policy are to:

- facilitate improved pupil learning
- create a procedure for monitoring achievement
- track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
- coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.

Principles

1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment must be to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.
3. Formative Assessment/Assessment of Learning (AFL) and Summative Assessment/Assessment of Learning (AoL) across all class levels is important. Formative assessments are regular, informal assessments that are used by teachers to assess student understanding and inform teaching strategy. Summative assessments are one-off testing, designed to find out what a child knows at the end of a period of learning.
4. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organization, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.
5. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
6. We recognize the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.
7. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers and parents
8. Assessment of behaviour and performance gradually builds up into a profile for each pupil over his school career. These are files for the use of teaching staff only. It is not an official school record.
9. Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and should not be administratively burdensome.

Policy Content

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils including the exceptionally gifted so that adequate strategies are in place early enough to facilitate remediation. These strategies may include pupil self assessment, pupil profiling, two way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programmes, and Individual Education Plans.

Informal Assessment

The most common forms of assessment used in our school are listed below. These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers. Records of teacher-designed tests are kept by the individual teachers and their findings help establish an overall picture to be communicated to parents at the Parent-teacher meeting / end of year report. Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing.

1. **Teacher Observation:** Observation of children in their oral work, written work, ability to listen, communicate and relate with others. Checklists and rating scales are often used in conjunction with teacher observation. It is a highly valuable method of assessing children and we place great value on this type of assessment in our school.
2. **Questioning:** Children are regularly questioned orally to assess what has been learned in a lesson or series of lessons. Children will also answer questions in written activities, to assess learning. Teachers vary the type of questioning methods used in their classrooms, some of which are listed here: Oral questions to include closed questions, open ended questions, probing, prompts. Teachers use the questioning guidelines from the NCCA Guidelines" Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum"
3. **Teacher Designed Tasks & Tests:** Written tests, Numeracy tests, Table Test, Spelling Tests, Miscue Analysis, Reading Running Records etc are regularly set for the children in various areas of the curriculum to assess what has been learned in a lesson or series of lessons.
4. **Work samples, portfolios and projects -** Children's portfolios are used to compile samples of work in different areas of the curriculum in order to assess progress over the school year. Usually the portfolio contains random samples of work and is a useful assessment tool in tracing the development in a child's work over a period of time.
5. **Curriculum profiles:** Curriculum profiles allow the teacher to make an overall judgement about the achievement of an individual child. They allow for the interpretation of a wide span of learning outcomes.
6. **Homework and class work** are marked and comments are made as appropriate. Marks and especially grades are not usually given. Work is ticked and dated to indicate that the teacher has looked at it and a written comment to indicate sources of error, good points etc. will sometimes be made. Informal assessment is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc.
7. **Self Assessment** is a way of encouraging children to evaluate and assess their own learning. Examples of ways children can self assess include traffic lights system, thumbs up/thumbs down, two/three stars and a wish, using rubrics etc.
8. **Peer Assessment** is a method of assessing children's work where students look at a partner's work and assess it. A clear success criteria needs to be established for peer assessment to work so the child reviewing it can understand if it meets the criteria.

Formal Assessment

Standardised Assessments

1. Sigma T provides teachers with information on the Mathematical achievements of their pupils from 1st-6th Class. This assessment is carried out each May/June.
2. Micra T provides teachers with information on the reading ability of their pupils from 1st-6th Class. This assessment is carried out each May/June.
3. New Non Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT) provides teachers with information on the pupils language and thinking skills. It is carried out twice in a child's school period, in 2nd Class (Level 2) and 5th Class in January/February (Level 3).
4. SWST (Single Word Spelling Test) provides teachers with information on spelling achievements of their pupils from 1st - 6th Class. This assessment is carried out in June.

Following DES guidelines standardized test scores of the Sigma-T and Micra-T will be orally given to parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher meetings and a STEN score will be written in the end of year reports.

Screening/Diagnostic Testing

In addition to formal assessments the Special Education Teachers may conduct screening and/or diagnostic tests at different times during the year. These tests identify learning difficulties in particular areas of the curriculum and the results can then be used in the remediation of a problem.

These tests include:

1. Belfield Infant Assessment Programme (BIAP) - Junior Infants, September/October
2. Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) - Senior Infants, January/February
3. York Assessment for Reading for Comprehension (YARC)
4. PM Benchmark Reading Assessment 1 - Senior Infants-Sixth Class, September, February, May
5. GL Dyslexia Screener

Primary to Secondary

For pupils leaving the school in 6th Class, a school transition passport is forwarded to the new Secondary School.

Assessment from Outside Agencies

Children may be referred to outside agencies following discussion between teachers and parents. These agencies could include: Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists etc

Recording

- Each pupil has a file which is stored in the filing cabinet in the staff room.
- Standardised Test scores are usually stored on a class record sheet held by the class teacher, a copy of which is kept in the filing cabinet in the staff room and on Google Drive.
- Children receiving extra support in school have a separate digital file on Google Drive which contains their Support Plans and regular liaison occurs between the Special Education Teachers and the Class Teachers.
- Information is passed on from teacher to teacher on a need to know basis.

Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if –

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in staged approach
- Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives.
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Roles and Responsibilities

Special Education teachers and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to offer Classroom Support with timed interventions at class level. At School Support and School Support Plus, the responsibilities are shared between the Special Education Teacher and the Class Teacher. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open.

Implementation

This policy will be fully implemented by June 2023.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 2nd February 2023 and communicated to parents thereafter.

Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed in three 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

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 2nd February 2023 and will be reviewed in 2025 or sooner if necessary.

Signed: *John Joseph Craefield*
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: *2 Feb. 2023*

Appendix 1 - Schedule of Assessments

Month	Class	Assessment/Test
September/October	Junior Infants	BIAP
September	Senior Infants - Sixth Class	PM Benchmark Reading Assessment 1
December	First Class - Sixth Class	Ballard and Westwood Timed Arithmetic Test
January/February	Senior Infants	MIST
January/February	Second Class	NNRIT Level 2
	Fifth Class	NNRIT Level 3
February	Senior Infants - Sixth Class	PM Benchmark Reading Assessment 1
March/April (Easter)	First Class - Sixth Class	Ballard and Westwood Timed Arithmetic Test
May/June	First Class	Micra-T Level 1
	Second Class	Micra- T Level 2
	Third & Fourth Class	Micra-T Level 3
	Fifth & Sixth Class	Micra-T Level 4
May/June	First Class	Sigma - T Level 1
	Second Class	Sigma - T Level 2
	Third Class	Sigma - T Level 3
	Fourth Class	Sigma - T Level 4
	Fifth & Sixth Class	Sigma - T Level 5
May	Junior Infants - Sixth Class	PM Benchmark Reading Assessment 1
June	First Class - Sixth Class	SWST
June	First Class - Sixth Class	Ballard and Westwood Timed Arithmetic Test

