

Killina National School



Assessment Policy

Introductory Statement

In January 2010, following *the NCCA publication, 'Assessment in the Primary School: Guidelines for Schools'*, staff received support from a P.P.D.S. advisor. After this advisory session, our Assessment Policy was drawn up, with the full collaboration of all staff, on the School Planning Day in November 2010. In June 2012 this policy was reviewed in light of the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*.

Rationale

At Killina National School, our aim is to have high standards of teaching and learning, and to enable each child to attain the highest level of his/her ability at every stage. We consider assessment to be an integral part of teaching and learning. Assessment enables teachers to know at what level to pitch work, and how to move forward in teaching. It allows parents and children to have feedback on how well a child is doing in learning, and to understand what they can improve on, and how they can do this.

The policy sets out to formalise our existing practice within this school, and is our response to the Department of Education's recent publication on assessment entitled "*Guidelines, Assessment in Primary School Curriculum (2007)*".

Aims

Our aims in introducing this policy are:

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To generate base-line data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To assist teachers long and short term planning
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis.

Forms of Assessment

Assessment can be described in the following terms:

Formative: Helping the child in the process of learning.

Evaluative: Helping the teacher to evaluate the learning opportunities provided. We can carefully plan activities taking into account the needs of the child so that their skills, knowledge and understanding are fully developed. Children will also be involved in assessing their own work.

Summative: Providing information for reports and school records. We can then write a summary report based on evidence of what a child knows, understands and can do.

Informative: This provides information for parents and for the child's next teacher. We can then communicate to parents and teachers how the child is performing.

Each form of assessment will enable teachers

- To inform planning for, and coverage of, all areas of the curriculum
- To gather and interpret data at individual, class and whole-school level, and in relation to class and national norms
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils or groups of pupils, including the exceptionally able
- To contribute to the school's strategy for dealing effectively with learning difficulties
- To monitor pupil progress and attainment
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- To compile records of individual pupil's progress and attainment
- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupil's development, progress and learning needs
- To facilitate the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work
- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies.

Techniques for Assessment

- Focused Observations - observing a child or a group of children at an activity.
- Random Observations - monitoring what is happening i.e. works better in a group, alone, tires easily, responds to visual promptings etc.
- Structured Observations - observing one particular child each day at set intervals.
- Discussion, conferencing - talking to and questioning the children about their work, setting targets for future work.
- Presentations - evaluating with the child the outcome or end product - writing, drawing, diagram, model chart etc.
- Monitoring spelling and table tests.
- Teacher designed tests (from 3rd upwards).
- Portfolios of work. (Teachers keep samples of children's work).
- Stage assessments at the end of blocks of work, particularly in Mathematics.
- Mental Maths test (given weekly in middle and senior classes).
- Behaviour and attendance monitored where necessary.
- Each teacher has a copy of the Drumcondra Profiles for reading and writing which describe levels of attainment for the class. This is a useful checklist for teacher use.

Screening

The Middle Infants Standard Test (MIST) is administered by the Learning Support teacher to Senior Infants in January/February of each year. There are four parts to this test:

- Alphabet letters and sounds:
- Listening skills:
- Words dictated in a sentence:
- Children are asked to write all the words they know.

If children score below expectations, we then invite their parents or guardians to work with the Learning Support Teacher and with their child at home in the Forward Together programme. The teacher sees parents in a group or individually and shows them how to help their child.

Standardised tests

English-medium schools are required to implement standardised testing in English and Mathematics during the period May/June for all students in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes with effect from June 2012.

In Killina National School, the following standardised tests are administered to all classes from 1st to 6th:

- Micra-T
- Sigma-T

Both tests are administered during the last term (May/June).

- The Learning Support Teacher is responsible for the purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing.
- Class teachers administer these tests to their own classes during the given period (indicated above), adhering strictly to the conditions outlined 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.
- Staff is involved in the analysis of standardised test results for an individual pupil, class and whole school level.
- It is our policy to offer learning support to children with a STEN of three or below (c.f. Learning Support Policy).
- Information gathered from the analysis of results informs long term and short term plans, I.E.P.'s and I.P.L.P.'s.
- Results are communicated to parents of children in all classes in annual end of year reports. The school will provide parents with copies of the NCCA explanatory leaflets when issuing written reports.
- STEN results and descriptors are used to communicate results to parents.
- At the end of each school year the Principal will report aggregated assessment data from standardised tests to the Board of Management. The report will comprise the aggregated results of standardised tests administered in accordance with circular 0056/2011.
- The principal will send a copy of the end-of-year report card (including the information from standardised tests) to the primary or second-level school to which a student transfers
- The Principal will report aggregate standardised test results to the Department of Education and Skills once annually in accordance with circular 0056/2011. The aggregate results for each class will be recorded following completion of standardised assessments of English and Mathematics in second, fourth and sixth classes in May/June of each year.

Diagnostic Assessment (c.f. Learning Support Policy)

After consultation with the class teacher and with the consent of parents, the Learning Support Teacher will administer initial diagnostic assessment. For a complete list of tests which are available in our school, please see our Learning Support Policy and Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

The results of diagnostic assessment are recorded in the IPLP for each pupil. The profile will also include:

- Previous test results
- Relevant information from class teachers, parents and other professionals
- Identification of the pupils particular needs.

Procedures for Further Assessment

After diagnostic assessment and a complete instructional term of learning support, each child's Individual Profile and Learning Programme will be reviewed. If there are serious concerns expressed by the parents, support teacher and class teacher, further psychological assessment will be explored. The Learning Support Teacher will seek advice from the NEPS psychologist and discuss the 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 class teacher in consultation with the Learning Support Teacher.

Recording Results of Assessment

- The results of each child's Sigma-T and Micra-T are recorded electronically. This allows us to build up an Individual Pupil's Profile, a class profile, and a whole school profile. These results are kept in the school office in a locked filing cabinet.
- At the end of the academic year or at the beginning of the academic year each teacher will, where possible, be given the opportunity to have a meeting with the previous class teacher who will brief him/her on the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil.
- Children's records are held in the school in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

Success Criteria

This policy will be successful when:

- Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects.
- The transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of school year.
- The school works with parents to support the children by sharing meaningful information about their progress.
- Teachers, principals and boards of management use the assessment information to inform their school self-evaluation, reflective practices and their school improvement plans.

Roles and Responsibility

The Principal and the Learning Support Teacher will have responsibility for the implementation of this policy. This policy will be implemented during the academic year 2012/2013.

Ratification and Communication

This reviewed policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 25th June, 2012.

It will be reviewed again in the 2014.

Appendix 1

Assessment Tools - Learning Support / Class Teachers

Junior Infants

- Teacher observation
- Sample work - drawing/letter and shape formation
- Oral language indicators
- Social skills checklist
- Letter and sound knowledge
- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (B.I.A.P.)
- Drumcondra profiles
- Early Literacy Test

Senior Infants

- Teacher observation
- Sample work - drawings/letter and shape knowledge
- Social skills checklist
- Letter and sound knowledge (Neale Assessment)
- Visual Discrimination Test (Daniels and Diack)
- Auditory Discrimination (Wepman)
- Rhyming words list
- MIST Assessment.
- Dolch List (50 Words)

1st Class

- Teacher observation
- Sample work - writing/drawings
- Class spelling lists
- Dolch List of 100 Basic Sight Words
- Drumcondra Profile Checklist
- Micra-T results
- Sigma -T

2nd Class

Same as 1st Class with:

- Neale Analysis Reading Test
- Micra-T results
- NRIT (Intelligence Test).
- Sigma -T

3rd to 6th Classes

- Teacher observation
- Sample writing and copy work
- Class spelling test results
- Drumcondra Profiles - English / Oral Language / Writing
- Schonell Graded Spelling Test (Aston Index)
- Schonell Graded Word Reading Test (Aston Index)
- Neale Analysis for Reading Accuracy and Comprehension
- Micra T results
- NRIT
- Aston Index
- Pupil Literacy Profiles
- Sigma-T