

Our Lady of Lourdes National School Assessment Policy

Introduction

This policy was formulated by the staff of Our Lady of Lourdes National School. The policy is based on advice and information provided in the Primary Curriculum, the NCCA website, the NCCA booklet *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools* and Circular 0138/2006.

Rationale

In order to ensure that all children in our school achieve to the best of their ability we believe it is imperative that any learning difficulties are identified at the earliest opportunity and that the school must put in place an appropriate response to their needs. An effective assessment policy ensures quality in education is central to this process of teaching and learning. Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short term and long term needs of the child and plans accordingly. Assessment assists communication to all parties involved in the child's education i.e. teacher and child, teacher and parent and teacher to teacher. It helps the child become more self-aware as a learner and develops powers of self-assessment. It is integral to all areas of the curriculum and to the child's growth in self-esteem and acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective policy of assessment will identify the early interventions required to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

Aims of our Assessment Policy

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To generate baseline 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 coordinate assessment procedures on a whole-school basis
- To identify pupils who may need or could benefit from Learning Support and resource teaching
- To efficiently share information on pupils' educational progress with parents/guardians at the end of the school year and according to guidelines in Circular 0056/2011 and with transfer to secondary school or another primary school following guidelines in circular 0045/2014

Purposes of Assessment

- To inform planning for all areas of the curriculum
- To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils including the exceptionally able
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes and their teaching methodologies in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- To compile records of individual 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 the assessment of their own work where feasible
- To monitor pupils' progress and attainment

Definition of Assessment

In line with the NCCA, our staff believe that assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is concerned with children's progress and achievement. It involves gathering information to understand how each child is progressing at school and using that information to further a child's learning. We concur with their definition of classroom with the "*process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes*". Assessment, therefore, involves more than testing. It is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the child that include moment-by-moment conversations, observations and actions. (NCCA, *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools*. November 2007 p.7).

Range of Assessment Methods used throughout the School

Both *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning* will be used by teachers to make professional judgements about pupil achievement/progress. Deciding what to assess will be based on the curriculum objectives in each curriculum area/subject and on what the teacher intends to help the children to learn. Each teacher will use the most appropriate assessment method to measure the extent to which children have achieved these objectives. The range of assessment methods to be used throughout the school is outlined below.

Assessment for Learning

At its heart, assessment for learning is a way of informing and involving the learners themselves in the process of assessment. The following methods of Assessment for Learning [AFL] are used in the school.

- **Teacher Observation**

The Primary School Curriculum recommends the use of teacher observation in all subjects. The value of teacher observation as an assessment tool cannot be underestimated and may often be the only way to assess a child's progress accurately. Teachers may refer to New Guidelines for Schools pg. 46-52.

- **Teacher-designed tasks and tests**

Examples of these include weekly spelling/ tables tests and termly assessment in Maths. Teachers will keep appropriate written records and may refer to New Guidelines for Schools pg. 54-59 and also pg.89-90.

- **Pupil Self Assessment**

Pupils are encouraged to become involved in the assessment of their own work/progress. Examples include the procedure of editing one's own work and the use of a highlighting system.

- **Completed Assignments by pupils**
- **Parental, pupil feedback or observation**
- **Standardised Tests**
- **Diagnostic Tests**
- **Assessment by psychologist**

Assessment of Learning:

The following methods of Assessment for Learning are used in the school:

Standardised Tests

- The following tests are used:
Drumcondra Early Literacy and Numeracy
Middle Infant Screening Test
Jolly Phonics Assessment Tests
Drumcondra Primary Reading Test [Levels 1 to 6]
Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test [Levels 1 – 6]
Sigma T Maths Test [Levels 1 – 6]
Quest Screening Test
- The SENCO is responsible for purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing. The Class Teacher administers the Standardised Tests and records the results.
- Each child's raw score, standard score, percentile rank and STEN score is recorded.
- The results will be analysed at whole school level and at individual class level and the information gathered from the tests will be used to inform teaching and learning.
- The results will help determine the allocation of Learning Support/Resource hours in the school and the nature of the support provided.

- Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card. The STEN score is used to explain results to parents.
- Pupils may be excluded from the tests if, in the view of the school, they have a learning or a physical disability which would prevent them from taking the test or, in the case of newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such, that attempting the test would be inappropriate.

Screening

Priority will be given to pupils who are performing at or below the 12th percentile in English and Mathematics. The Continuum of Support as outlined in *Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers [DES 2007]* will be followed.

Diagnostic Testing

- Diagnostic tests have an important role to play in identifying children with learning difficulties. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by Circular 02/05 where a staged approach is used by individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing.
- Diagnostic tests will be administered by Special Education teachers and the results will be recorded and analysed.
- The results will be used in the drawing up of Individual Education Plans for pupils.

The following tests are used:

Drumcondra Early Literacy Diagnostic

Drumcondra Early Numeracy Diagnostic

Daniels and Diack Early Reading Infant Reading Tests

Sigma T Maths Test (Level1 – Level 6)

Quest Diagnostic Tests

*Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. Other diagnostic tests may be purchased and administered when deemed appropriate.

Overall Cognitive Ability Tests

Tests to assess pupils verbal and non-verbal reasoning abilities will be administered at the beginning of Second and Fifth classes.

The following tests will be used:

- Non-verbal Reasoning GL Assessment
- Verbal Reasoning GL Assessment
- Non Reading Intelligence Test NRIT II
- These tests will be administered by the Special Education teachers.
- The results will be recorded and analysed.

Psychological Assessment

- The class teacher and learning support teacher liaise with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required. Standard consent forms are used.
- The Principal in consultation with the SENCO is responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist etc.
- The results of assessments will guide the drafting of an Individual Education Plan for the pupil if appropriate. It determines the level of intervention, either learning support from the general allocation or individual resource teaching hours.
- The Principal and SENCO will ensure that details of relevant reports are transferred with all 6th Class pupils on their transfer to Second Level Education.

Recording Results of Assessment

- Test results are recorded on Class Record Sheets and copies of them are made available to the incoming class teacher, SENCO and Principal.
- Each pupil has a file in a locked cabinet in the Principal's Office. End of year reports are stored here.
- Standardised test results and copies of assessments will be stored in a locked cabinet.
- In line with the National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy standardised test results will be given to the relevant second level school on transfer from Primary to Second Level.
- Standardised test results will be given to the Board of Management to review overall school standards in Literacy/ Numeracy.[No individual results will be identifiable]
- Assessment information will be safely stored to facilitate access to it by former pupils at any stage until their 21st birthday.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mainstream Class Teachers, Special Education Teachers and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team. The Principal assumes a primary role at Stage 3 when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open.

Success Criteria

- A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning.
- Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects.
- Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of the school year.

Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed again in 2 years time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on _____
and communicated to parents thereafter.

Reference Section

- Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum- Guidelines for Schools, NCCA, 2007
- Special Educational Needs- a Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers and Resource Pack for Teachers, NEPS, 2007
- Learning Support Guidelines, DES, 2000
- Circular 0138/2006 Supporting Assessment in Primary Schools
- Circular 02/05 Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools
- Circular 56/2011
- Circular 45/2014
- Circular 13/2017
- Primary School Curriculum- section on assessment for each subject