

St Olaf's NS

Assessment & Recording Policy

Introduction

This policy was originally drafted following a whole-school planning day. The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 18/05/2016.

Policy Rationale

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. 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. 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. 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.
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
5. 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.
6. In addition to normal assessment, opportunities are taken to record significant points in a child's development, such as:
 - a moment of 'breakthrough' in understanding
 - surprises and unusual reactions
 - interesting examples of strategies for mental calculation
 - difficulties encountered and possible reasons for them.
7. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.
8. 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 able 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. See also SEN Policy.

Formal Assessment

The intake class is assessed in September of each year. Tests used usually include the NRIT. Further diagnostic tests are carried out throughout the year by the SET on specific children as need arises. The Drumcondra Maths and Drumcondra English Tests are administered in May / June of each year to all children except those in infant classes and an alternative standardised test is administered to all first-class children in September also (Micra T).

1. Informal Assessment

Homework and classwork are marked and comments are made as appropriate. Marks and especially grades are not usually given. Work is ticked to indicate that the teacher has looked at it and a written comment to indicate sources of error, good points etc. will normally be made. Spelling mistakes are corrected as outlined in the school spelling policy.

2. **Class work**

Obviously, 'informal' assessment is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc.

3. **Homework**

Homework is checked both formally and informally in a routine way.

Completion of Project work

The completed project or notes on a topic is collected and marked. The marking recognizes excellence and indicates the areas that need improvement.

Primary to Secondary

A meeting is held each year with key staff from the local second-level schools to discuss pupils' performance in their assessment tests and to report on individual pupils. This meeting is attended by the sixth class teachers and sometimes the principal.

For pupils leaving the school, up to date records are passed on to the principal by the class teacher for forwarding to the new school (Ed Passport).

Standardised Testing

The school administers the Drumcondra Reading & Maths tests annually. All classes from First class upwards are tested. The tests are usually administered towards the end of the last term by the class teacher. Standard and Percentile Rankings scores are recorded on the Aladdin pupil management system and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in the SEN Room (15). The SET analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Pupils in Senior Infants are assessed using the **MIST** test and Junior Infants are assessed using the NRIT.

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

Diagnostic Assessment

The school policy on Psychological Assessments lists all diagnostic tests used by the school. Such tests are administered by the SET team following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents / guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by Circular 02/05 where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. Parents are advised of the outcome and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed. The Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening.

The diagnostic tests used in the school include –

- Neale Analysis
- Quest Diagnostic
- Aston Index

Screening

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in our school are –

- Belfield Infant Assessment Programme (discontinued)
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) discontinued)
- Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)
- Sigma T / Micra T (occasionally).
- YARK
- TrT - 2017

These tests are administered individually or on a whole class basis. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per circulars 24/03 and 02/05.

Psychological Assessment

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention the class teacher / Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a Psychological Assessment for their child (see Psychological Assessment policy). An assessment will help to determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it Learning Support Resource

hours or an Individual Education Plan. The most common form of assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher designed tests, projects and homework (informal assessment). These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers. Records of teacher-designed tests are kept by the individual teachers and 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. The most common types of informal teacher designed testing in our school are Maths tests, spelling tests and quizzes.

Recording

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the Aladdin system. Test scores are usually stored here also with a copy in the office and one with the class teacher. Information is passed on from teacher to teacher via Aladdin. Colour coding on class lists indicates pupils who receive(d) LS in Literacy / Numeracy. Children receiving extra support in school also have a separate file which contains their IPLP. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).

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 SET 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 set in train staged interventions at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education team. The Principal or SEN co-ordinator 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.

Implementation

This policy will be fully implemented by --Sept 2017

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2016 and communicated to parents thereafter.

Review Timetable

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