



This policy was developed after a consultation process involving all the teachers in the school. The process included School Development Planning in-service days on assessment and was finalised at a staff planning day 16th Nov. 2009. It was reviewed by the Board of Management in June 2014 and again in 2016.

The Policy is informed by the 1998 Education Act, The Primary School Curriculum (1999) & DES Circular 0136/2006 'Supporting Assessment in Primary Schools'.

The Aims of the assessment policy are

- to support and enhance teaching and learning
- to assess and certify achievement
- to assist in the identification and management of learning needs
- to fulfil our official and legal requirements

Ultimate responsibility for the policy lies with the Board of Management. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the principal and the teachers. Responsibility for monitoring and review lies with the principal, in consultation with the teaching staff and under the authority of the Board of Management.

The policy will be supported as follows:

- by the principal with the teachers on a day to day basis
- Standardised Test grant from the DES
- Professional Development for staff will be organised, as required
- Templates and/or checklists will be developed, as required. (See Appendix)
- Secure storage to be provided by BOM
- Time for consultation and liaison to be co-ordinated by SN teachers

Implementation of the policy started in 2009 and the policy was fully implemented by the end of 2010. The policy will be reviewed at least every second year or more often, if required. The review will be co-ordinated by the Principal and will involve all the staff. Initial approval of the BOM was obtained in 2009.

Copies of the policy will be available in the School Plan in the Principal's office. Each teacher and member of the BOM will be provided with a copy. A copy is provided to the Parents Association through the parents' representatives on the BOM. The Policy is available to other professionals on a need to know basis.

Assessment is a process that involves gathering, interpreting, recording, using and communicating information about pupils' social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Assessment involves assessment **of** learning and assessment **for** learning.

Assessment serves at least two important functions. It can be used to inform and improve teaching and learning and it can be used to fulfil official and legal requirements.



## Assessment & Record Keeping

Our policy is structured around these headings as follows:

1. Gathering
2. Interpreting
3. Recording
4. Using
5. Communicating
6. Teaching and Learning
7. Official Assessment

### **1. Gathering Information for Teaching and Learning**

All curricular areas will be assessed as will application, effort, behaviour, attitude towards learning, attention, teamwork and progress.

Priority is given to assessment in literacy, mathematics, the identification of learning difficulties and the progress made by each pupil.

Curricular areas will be assessed by standardised tests, teacher designed tests, teacher observation, pupil participation and response.

Teacher designed tests in literacy and maths are given to all classes at least once per term. Teachers' tests in the other curricular areas may be administered in accordance with the school plan for each subject.

Pupils will be involved in self-assessment in all classes. They will be taught to reflect on their answers, to check their own work and to look for ways to improve their work. Rubrics will be used to achieve this. Editing is a central part of the writing process in English. Peer Assessment is also used as part of the school's Co-operative Learning policy.

Background information is gathered from previous teachers, parents and where appropriate, additional information from other professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists, etc.

### **2. Gathering information for official and Legal Requirements.**

The priorities for official assessment are screening children for learning difficulties, providing information for parent teacher meetings and providing data on the achievement of school targets.

The following instruments may be used to gather information for official assessments:

Micra T  
Sigma T  
Quest  
MIST  
Aston Index  
Neale Analysis of Reading Ability  
NRIT  
Professional judgement of teachers  
Planet Maths Assessment Tests  
Jackson Words Lists  
Jolly Phonic Tests



Letter Name Sounds

Word lists from Ort, Jolly Phonics, Dolch & Readers

Table Tests

Spelling Tests

Micra T and Sigma T tests are administered to all classes from First to Sixth in May of each year. NRIT is administered in classes Second and Fifth in November of each year.

Our Special Needs Policy outlines procedures to facilitate the early identification of learning difficulties.

### **3. Interpreting information for teaching and Learning**

In making judgements about pupil achievement and progress, teachers will use multiple sources of data and evidence. Achievement and progress will be clearly distinguished from effort and behaviour. Teachers will interpret evidence from the following sources.

- Changes in Standardised test results
- Reading Record of LS students
- Teacher test results
- Oral responses of students
- Written work of students
- General background information
- Comparison of work at different times of year
- Start at what they are able to do
- Ability to follow directions
- Don't compare with other pupils
- Comparison with expected standard of work
- Improvement

### **4. Interpreting information for official and legal requirements.**

The following assessments may be used for important decisions

NRIT

Sigma T

Micra T

MIST

Aston Index

Teacher designed tests

Professional judgement and observations of teachers

No school contextual issues will be taken into account when evaluating the validity the outcomes from official assessments.



Students will be selected for special education needs support according to the following criteria:

- Students who have been assessed as having low-incidence disabilities and who have been granted supplementary teaching hours
- Micra T scores below 12<sup>th</sup> % ile
- Early intervention in classes infants to second
- Sigma T scores below 12th %ile
- Children in Junior classes appearing to have difficulties in numeracy on advice of class teacher
- Children falling below 20th percentile at literacy as above
- Children falling below 20th percentile at numeracy as above
- Other children in school for literacy and numeracy on advice of class teachers, principal and LS/RT

Measurement error be included when interpreting a pupil's score in accordance with the test manual (e.g. +/-2 on Sigma-T and Micra-T results).

Criteria for Continuing/Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching:

- Evaluation of students at the end of each instructional term: have IEP target been achieved? Has 10th percentile been exceeded?
- Consultation with class teacher and parents
- Continue present level of supplementary teaching
- Reduced level of supplementary teaching
- Class based support
- Full re-integration into class
- On-going monitoring

## **5. Recording information for Teaching and Learning**

Teacher may keep written records of the following at class level

- Results of teacher designed tests and tasks in English and Maths
- Significant observations of children in day-to-day learning including cognitive, creative, social and affective dimensions of their learning
- Samples of work
- Pupil strengths and weaknesses

The following will not be recorded

- Opinion which are unsupported by fact, data or evidence
- Personal negative comments or emotive language

These class records will be recorded on the home school report and in the teacher's own record system. The records will be passed to the next teacher when the pupil leaves the class together with a summary of significant teacher observations. Each class has an Excel sheet for the recording of factual information which will be stored on the external hard drive at the end of each school year. In so far as practicable, time will be arranged for teacher to teacher meetings at the end of each year.



## **6. Recording information for Official and Legal Requirements**

The following official assessments will be kept on file:

- Standardised Test results
- Psycho-educational assessment reports
- Speech and Language Assessment reports
- Home/school reports
- Relevant medical reports
- IEP

IEPs will be kept in the LS filing cabinets and on the external hard drive. Home/school reports and Teacher Assessment Information and observations on each pupil are kept in the class file by each class teacher. All other information is filed in the office. All files are archived by principal when pupils leave school. Files are preserved until pupils are at least 21 years of age.

## **7. Using Assessment information for Teaching and Learning**

Assessment information from all classes in all subjects will be used for teaching and learning. Class files and assessment information will be passed from teacher to teacher to facilitate whole school planning.

Teacher will provide feed-back to support pupils learning informally during lessons, by praising achievements and effort and by writing comments on pupil work.

In particular, teachers will endeavour to assess before and after teaching to inform as regards “assessment for learning” and “assessment of learning”, especially regarding individual, group work or intervention.

Teachers will also promote self-assessment amongst students by adopting a selection of the following methodologies

- Rubrics & Checklists
- No hands up...ask pupils at random...encourage pupils to explain their thinking even if they don't have the correct answer
- KWL ..what we know already...what we want to find out...what we have learned
- Success criteria... explain or show students what is expected... work samples...successful work form a previous year
- Talking partners...pupils talk about their thinking or answers to partner.. partner may speak on behalf of pupil
- Peer & teacher conferencing
- Hand signals for lesson (Building Bridges of Understanding)
- 2 Stars & a Wish



## **8. Using Assessment information for Official and Legal Purposes**

Teachers' informal classroom assessments will contribute summative information for official purposes. This will be done by referring to class files, teachers' reports and to teachers when compiling information for official reports.

Pupil performance on standardised tests and other official assessments will be used for diagnostic purposes by class and SN teachers.

## **9. Communicating information for teaching and learning**

Classroom assessment information is shared with colleagues when pupils move to a new class within the school. This is done by passing on home school reports, results of teacher tests and observations and by word of mouth

Teacher will gather, record, interpret use and communicate information about the following aspects of learning:

- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Concepts
- Skills

The following classroom assessment information is reported to parents by teachers at parent/teacher meetings and end of year reports:

Standardised Test results (Reading age and class-based percentiles with Micra T results, class-based percentiles with Sigma T)

Diagnostic Test results

Class test results

Teacher judgements and observations about pupil achievement in all subjects

Teacher judgement and observations about behaviour, effort, teamwork and relationships, learning strengths and weaknesses.

Extract from Sigma-T and Micra-T Manuals regarding interpretation and communication of standardised test results:

*It must be emphasised that the results of psychological and educational tests do not possess the same precision and accuracy as, for example, physical measurements. Test results may be adversely affected by temporary states such as fatigue, anxiety, demoralisation, inattentiveness or boredom. Conversely they may be artificially boosted by astute copying. Furthermore, motivational levels and attitudinal factors greatly influence test performance. Children's scores will inevitably reflect these fluctuations. Consequently, undue significance should not be attached to small differences in scores between pupils as these may be within the margin of error of the test.*

*It is important that these caveats be borne in mind, both in interpreting a child's test results and in conveying these results to parents or other interested parties. Albeit important, a test result is merely one datum in the evaluation of a child's performance. As with all educational*



## Assessment & Record Keeping

*tests, where a child obtains a score which is markedly discrepant with a teacher's expectations or with a previous performance, the reasons should be investigated rather than accepting the score simply at face value.*

*Where test results are to be disclosed to parents, it is recommended that care be taken not to imply absolute precision. They should be accompanied by a teacher's interpretation of their meaning and where appropriate, their implications. Accordingly, it is suggested that either Sten Scores or percentile bands (e.g. the top 10 per cent, the bottom 15 per cent) be employed to communicate results to parents.*

*Results are best conveyed to the parents in person, enabling the above points to be informatively treated.....*

*The entire series of tests is reserved for use by teachers and other qualified professional. The test booklets should not be sent home or given to parents as this would permit coaching of the test content. Coaching of any kind will seriously distort test results. (Sigma-T, Level 3 Manual, pp 15-17*

Results from Sigma T and Micra T (STEN scores) will be included on end of year report cards for each class and will be reported the D.E.S. at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> classes.

The SCORZ system from Fallons is used to store and analyse results.

## 10. Communicating Assessment information for Official and Legal Requirements

### Parent-teacher meetings

Parent teacher meetings are normally held once annually in November, individual meetings are arranged as the need arises.

Teachers will adhere to the following procedures when organising parent-teacher meetings:

#### · *Beforehand*

Be organised

Get information together

Have information, work, copies to hand and in right order

Have notes prepared beforehand

Have suggestions for parents ready

#### · *During*

Start with something positive

Remain as positive as possible

Ask open questions 'How is your child getting on?'

Be positive and honest

Finish with something positive



Fill in School Parent-teacher Meeting form to include:

Name of child, class, teacher, DOB, Learning Support teacher if applicable  
Information the teacher wishes to impart including test results  
Parents comments and suggestions  
Report to be as true a reflection of the meeting as possible  
Parent and teacher to sign and date all meeting reports.

*Afterwards*

Follow-up on any issues which arose and which require further action.

At teacher's discretion teachers may keep copies of tests or send them home i.e. Planet Maths Tests

School Report

One written school report is sent each year in June. Reports include information on pupil achievement in all subjects, together with teacher's professional observations on attendance, behaviour, teamwork and relationships, effort, pupil strengths and weaknesses. Suggestions for ways in which parents could assist pupil's learning may be included. Other areas may be included at the discretion of each teacher.

Teachers will use their professional expertise to provide an accurate and full written report to parents. A clear distinction is made between effort, behaviour and achievement.

Pupil achievement in all subjects will normally be described using the following terms

- 1 Experiencing significant difficulty
- 2 Experiencing some difficulty
- 3 Managing comfortably
- 4 Capable and competent
- 5 Highly capable and competent

and may be also accompanied by further teacher comments and observations. To assist parents in interpreting the reports a key may be included on reports.

Other Professionals

All relevant and legal information will be provided on a 'need to know' basis to the school inspector, NEPS psychologist, to other professionals or when pupils are transferring out of the school.



## **11. Ethical Issues**

### Safeguards will be put in place to ensure the ethical use of assessment

- Pupils will be named or identified only in reports to teacher or to their own parents.
- Administration and scoring of tests will be supervised by the school principal to ensure objectivity, standardisation and ethical use.

### Confidentiality of assessment information

- LS files will be kept in locked cabinets
- Files are kept in the secretary's office in a locked cabinet.
- Class files will always be kept out of sight

### Ensuring absence of bias in assessment

- Use of multiple sources of data
- Use of objective, standardised instruments.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The principal teacher has overall responsibility for co-ordinating and progressing the implementation of this plan. He will encourage and accept feedback and recommendations on its implementation from all concerned parties and report on findings.

It is the responsibility of all teachers to co-operate in the implementation of the plan.

## **Success Criteria**

The policy is considered successful if

- Teachers find it useful for their planning
- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- It helps to improve education standards in the school
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures
- Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers and between school & home

## **Implementation:**

This policy is effective from 2016.

## **Review Timetable:**

This policy will be reviewed in March 2018, or earlier if the need arises, and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.



## Assessment & Record Keeping

### References:

DES Circular 02/05 – 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

The Primary Curriculum Guidelines for assessment in the classroom

Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum

Roles of External Organisations in supporting children's learning

A Continuum of Methods for Assessment

Primary School Curriculum

Assessment Methods

A Closer Look and Assessment for Learning & Assessment of Learning

NEPS Continuum of Support 2007

NEPS Behavioural, Emotional & Social Difficulties

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Rev. P. Stafford (Chairperson)

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Signed

Patrick Stafford 11

Rev. P. Stafford (Chairperson)

Date

13<sup>th</sup> June 2016,