



St. Raphaela's Primary School

Policy on Assessment

Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up with the full collaboration of all staff and after a day's In-Service on Assessment in February 2008. It was approved by the Board of Management in March 2008, and will be reviewed in January 2011.

Rationale

At St. Raphaela's Primary 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 upon, and how they can do this.

This 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 the 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 prevention of 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 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 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.
- Classes from 1st upwards will do the Ballard Westwood multiplication table test once a term.
- Teacher designed tests (from 3rd upwards).
- Portfolios of work. (Teachers keep samples of children's work, and a school portfolio of Art is kept in the Resource Room).
- Staged assessments at the end of blocks of work, particularly in Mathematics.
- Mental Maths tests (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 of each year. There are four parts to this test:

- Alphabet letters and sounds: We expect children to score 23/26
- Listening skills: We expect children to score 7/9
- Words dictated in a sentence: We expect a score of 30/36
- Children are asked to write all the words they know: We expect them to write 20 words correctly.

If children score below our expectations for them, 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

Within the school, the following standardised tests are administered to all classes from 1st to 6th :

- Micra-T
- Sigma-T

Both are administered during the first term: Micra-T in the first two weeks in October, and Sigma-T in the first two weeks in November.

- 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.
- Principal, S.E.N team and staff are 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.L.P.'s.
- Results are communicated to parents at annual parent-teacher meetings. Explanatory letters are issued in advance, outlining the interpretation guidelines for parents.
- Percentile Rank, STEN and descriptors are used to communicate results to parents.

Diagnostic Assessment (c.f. Learning Support Policy, pg 8)

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, pg.'s 9 & 10, and Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

The results of diagnostic assessment are recorded in the Individual Learning Profile 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 ILP 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 the advice of 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 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. See attached sample. These results are kept in the school office. Each child has a yellow folder in the school office in which are kept copies of all reports and any other relevant information on the child. The office is locked when it is unattended.
- At the end of each academic year and at the beginning of each 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, and confirm the content of the curriculum covered in the previous year. Teachers are advised to ensure that their comments are based on objective evidence.
- Children's records are held in the school for a period of twenty years.

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.

Roles and Responsibility:

The Principal and the Learning Support Teacher will have responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in March 2008. It will be reviewed in January 2011.

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
- Primary School Curriculum - section on assessment for each subject
- Drumcondra English Profiles. G. Shiel & R. Murphy, ERC, 2000
- A range of assessment tests are listed on the SESS website www.sess.ie

Appendix 1

Assessment Tools - Learning Support

Junior Infants:

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

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.

1st Class:

- Teacher observation
- Sample work - writing/drawings
- Class spelling lists
- Visual discrimination (Daniels and Diack)
- Auditory Discrimination (Wepman)
- Goodenough Draw-a-Man
- Dolch List of 100 Basic Sight Words
- Young Reading Test
- Drumcondra Profile Checklist
- Micra-T results.

2nd Class:

Same as 1st Class with:

- Schonell Spelling Assessment
- Neale Analysis Reading Test
- GALT Sight Word checklist
- Phonics Analysis Test
- Micra-T results
- NRIT (Intelligence Test).

3rd to 6th Classes:

- Teacher observation
- Sample writing and copy work
- Class spelling test results
- Goodenough Draw - a Man
- Drumcondra Profiles - English / Oral Language / Writing
- Schonell Spelling Assessment
- Neale Analysis for Reading Accuracy and Comprehension
- WORD Reading Test (word analysis)
- RAIN Reading Test (sentences reading)
- GAP Comprehension Test
- Phonics Analysis Test
- Micra T results
- NRIT.