

## Title

### *Assessment Policy*

## Introductory Statement

This policy was updated by the teaching staff in Spring 2015 so as to have a transparent and uniform approach to assessment throughout the school.

## Rationale

Assessment has a significant role in the teaching and learning process in St. John's National School. As a staff, we believe in the relevance of both Assessment of and for Learning as identified by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA; 2007).

In order to ensure that all children in our school achieve their potential we believe it is imperative that any learning difficulties and/or differences 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 can help individual children 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 help identify when teaching interventions are required and thus assist the enhancement of the

provision and as a consequence increase confidence and raise self-esteem at individual pupil level.

### Aims:

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- 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 and to establish a firm link between assessment and decision making with regard to future strategies, content and methodologies in the classroom
- To describe strategies for assessment of pupils over as many areas of development as possible
- To emphasise the importance of early identification of pupils with specific numeracy and literacy problems through establishing relevant baseline data which in turn can be used to monitor achievement over time.
- To ensure availability of finance to purchase texts and resources
- To outline specific strategies for monitoring the progress of all pupils with particular learning needs

## Policy Content

### Purpose of Assessment

- To inform planning for, and coverage of 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 including the exceptionally able if applicable
- To monitor pupils 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 the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work where feasible

- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies

### Assessment of Learning

(1) The following are among some of the methods of informal assessment that are used in the school

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Work samples, portfolios & projects
- Checklists

(2) The above assessment methods are used across the whole school, at the discretion of individual teachers, depending on the requirements of individual pupils, class level or subject and parents are given feedback on a regular basis.

(3) Depending on the subject and the class level and the needs of individual pupils, teachers may assemble portfolios of pupil assignments, work samples, projects etc.

(4) The school's plan for each curriculum subject addresses the issue of assessment

(5) Examples of teacher designed tasks / tests

- Spelling test; tables test
- Termly assessment in maths
- Assessments in Irish / English / maths designed by teachers

(6) Pupils are encouraged to become involved in the assessment of their own work / progress. Examples include the use of

- Self-editing / drafting / redrafting
- Comments good / needs improvement
- Self-evaluation using symbol
- This data will be stored in assessment folders / children's copies

**Standardised Testing:**

All classes from First class to Sixth are assessed formally using the *Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (DPRT)* and the *Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test (DPMT)*. The tests are usually administered in the last week May by the class teacher for the purpose of gaining quantitative, standardised data about individual pupil attainments in reading and mathematics. This assessment procedure also allows the teaching staff to identify those children who will qualify for support teaching from the Learning Support Teacher in the following academic year. The results are stored in individual pupil folders held by the class teacher in a locked filing cabinet.

Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card; STEN scores is used to explain results to parents.

**Screening:** (See also: Policy on *Special Educational Needs*)

First step in identifying pupils who may need Learning Support in Literacy or Numeracy is for the class teacher to administer screening tests.

The particular screening measures that are administered will depend on the age and stage of development of the pupils.

In Infants Early Intervention Testing which includes the Drumcondra Profiles may be used along with assessments accompanying the Jolly Phonics Programme.

In the second term of Senior Infants the M.I.S.T test is administered by class teacher or Education Support teacher. Also in this term the Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT) is administered to pupils in 2<sup>nd</sup> class with provision to administer it in 4<sup>th</sup> class if it is deemed necessary.

From the end of First Class onwards Standardised Norm Referenced Tests are used, specifically the Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (DPRT), Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test (DPMT), Drumcondra Spelling & Drumcondra Gaeilge for 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Class are available.

The Principal, in conjunction with all staff, analyses the results of these tests. The Education Support teacher(s) will then include the children in their timetables. The results of end of year testing are included in end of year reports.

On acceptance of additional support at school, parents sign a consent form.

### **Diagnostic Testing:**

Diagnostic tests have an important role to play in identifying children with learning difficulties. The administration of such tests from Senior Infants 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.

Newer and more up to date tests are being reviewed by the SEN team.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Outside Therapists

Speech & Language Therapy Assessments

Occupational Therapy Assessments

Physiotherapy Assessments

Play Therapy Assessments

We use guidelines from these assessments to set targets for progression of skills in an individual basis.

### **Educational Psychological Assessments**

Each academic year a cohort of children will be identified for assessment / observation that academic year. The class teacher and / or Principal meet parents & a consent form is signed by the parents if the child is recommended for psychological assessment.

The Principal will organise the assessment.

Children who present with possible Speech & Language/Occupational Therapy needs will be identified by teachers to the Principal. The Principal and/or the class teacher will

advise parents re: getting a medical referral from their G.P. or making a school referral to Community Services.

The results of assessments will guide staff in planning for the pupil if appropriate. It may help determine the level of intervention required; general allocation or low incidence support.

The Principal will ensure that details of relevant reports are transferred with all 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils on their transfer to Second Level Education.

### **Recording Results Of Assessment**

Each pupil has a file in a locked cabinet in classroom. Test results pages, end of year reports, copies of assessments etc. are kept here.

All data is sensitive to each child and therefore the cabinet must be locked at all times.

In line with the National Strategy to improve Literacy & Numeracy and once guidelines are in place standardised test results will be given to the relevant second level school on transfer from Primary to Second Level.

End of year assessment results will determine who will receive LS for the following year.

The 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 of Learning And Assessment For Learning**

As a school we are developing good practice in assessing learning. Results are used to select children for

- Selecting necessary interventions if required
- To measure the progress of the children's learning
- To evaluate for planning targets of class teachers and SEN teachers
- As a guide for professional development
- To guide the school to select target areas of various subjects for further school development planning
- To report to parents

- To highlight good practice and school strengths
- To keep a clear focus on good teaching and learning
- To inform the BOM and DES of levels attained in Numeracy & Literacy

### **Assessment For Learning**

Following professional reflection we realise that our major emphasis to date has been on Assessment of Learning and that it is important that children reflect on and be aware of their own learning. (Assessment for Learning) We plan to ultimately teach children how to self-assess by

- (a) Setting clear learning targets / outcomes
- (b) Followed by then setting criteria to make judgements before the child commences their work
- (c) On completion by assessing their work according to the agreed criteria already set.

### **Success Criteria**

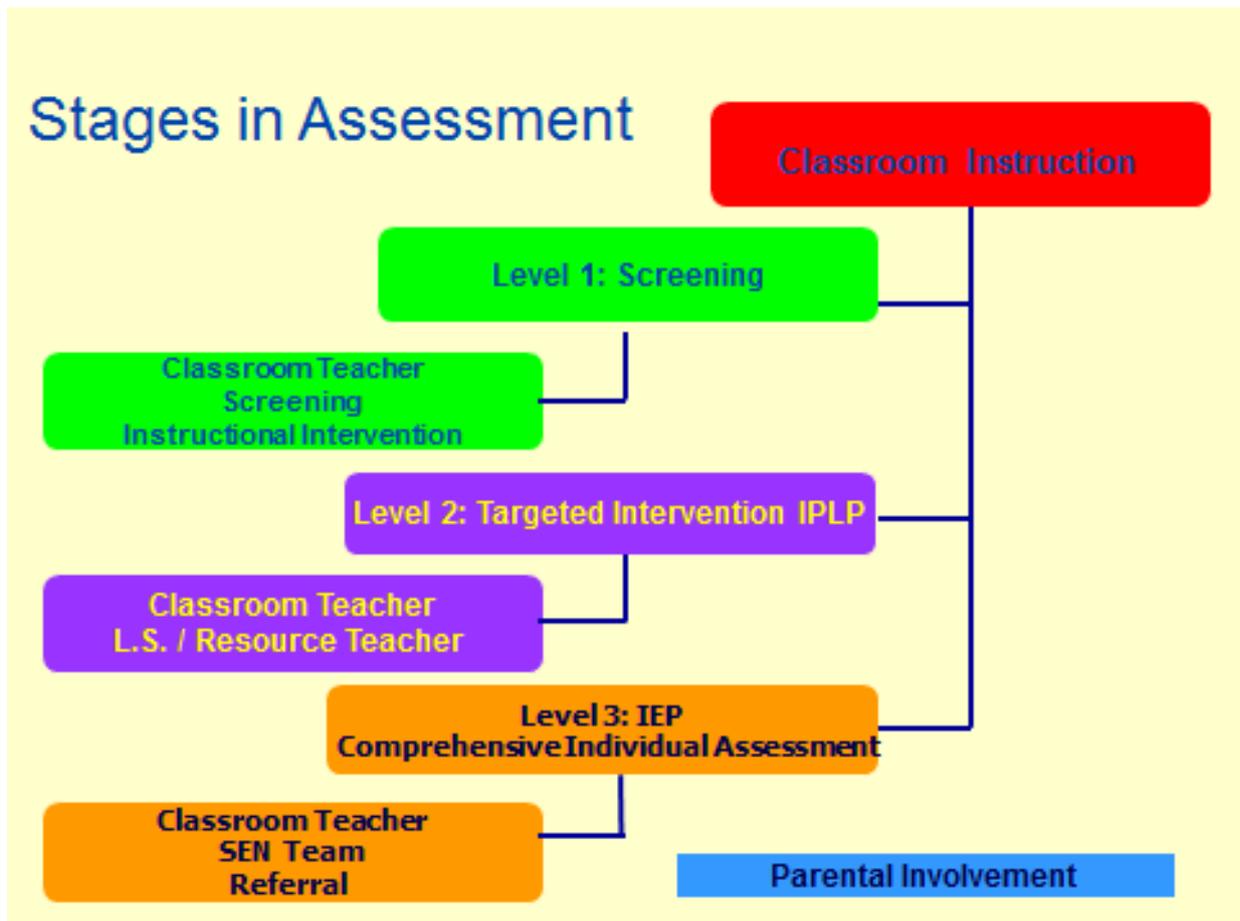
This policy is considered successful if;

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Mainstream, Education Support Teachers and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level (Level 1). At School Support Level (Level 2), the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team. The Principal assumes a primary role at School Support Plus (Level 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



## Ratification & Communication

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

## Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed in 2017 and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

## References

DES Circular 02/05 – 24/03

NEPS Continuum of Support (2007)

[www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)