



Dalkey School Project
National School
Educate Together

ASSESSMENT POLICY

September 2015

Introductory Statement and Rationale

This policy was formulated by the staff of Dalkey School Project NS on our school development planning day on 27.08.2015. 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.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Assessment activities used in this school will contribute to pupil learning and development by gathering relevant information to guide each pupil's further learning (assessment for learning) and by providing information on each pupils achievement at a particular point in time (assessment of learning). This links with our aim/mission: *Dalkey School Project National School strives to create a happy, friendly, inclusive, educational environment where each child is unique and valued. We are a welcoming school where diverse talents are appreciated and the school community works together respectfully. We cooperate to have a peaceful and safe atmosphere in which to learn and teach. We nurture each person's potential and aspire to excellence.*

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.

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 active involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work

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 assessment as "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 much 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 are outlined below.

Assessment for each subject is mentioned in the relevant curriculum plans. Accordingly, the assessment policy will present a comprehensive overview of the strategies for assessment engaged throughout the school.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING:

The following methods of Assessment for Learning (AfL) are used in the school

Sharing the learning intention/objective and devising success criteria (Guidelines pp9, 70 and 77)

- Teachers will inform children of WALT (We Are Learning Today) and WILF (What I Am Looking For)

Teacher observation

- Each teacher will have an observation book/folder/checklist where significant observations of children's progress will be recorded. This may be as a result of target child observation, event samples, anecdotal observation and/or shadow study.
- Where appropriate, teachers will use/develop rubrics or checklists to assist with teacher observation.
- Teacher observation will be used to inform teaching

Teacher-designed tasks and tests.

Portfolios

- Teachers select three pieces of work per tracker child based on the three genres of writing for that year. Observations are informed by assessing the work of a tracker child work at the beginning of teaching a genre and at the end.

- JI - 2nd will use teacher designed checklists (Sept 2015 see assessment folder on server for writing checklist);
- 3rd - 6th Prompts for examining pupils writing (Sept 2015 see assessment folder on server - writing rubrics)
- **Success and Improvement Strategies** (also referred to as 'two stars and a wish').
- **Effective teacher questioning** - teachers use higher order questioning to provoke fruitful discussion.
- Examples of Higher Order Questions may be found in the Guidelines for schools pp.86 - 88. Other issues relating to questioning are outlined on pages 42 - 44.

• PUPIL SELF ASSESSMENT -

Self-assessment is the means by which pupils take responsibility for their own learning. will be promoted as part of school improvement. Once the structure/framework and language features and each genre have been explored in class and displayed on 'living' charts in the classroom children can use the charts to self-assess their work.

- **Teachers can refer to Guidelines for Schools pp14 - 23.**

Teachers will select from the following strategies to aid self-assessment as appropriate -

- **KWL/KWHL charts** (Guidelines p. 20, 21, and 92).
- **Rubrics** - Guidelines pp 52 and 54.
- **Evaluation sheets** - (Guidelines pp 19 and 93)
- **Self Evaluation Questions to facilitate reflection**
- **Graphic Organisers** - include KWL charts Rubrics etc. (See guidelines pp. 84 - 85)
- **Learning Log**
- **Conferencing** (Guidelines pp. 24 - 27)
- **Completed assignments by pupils** - projects, copybooks, activities, work samples, homework
- **Parental, pupil feedback or observation**
- **Standardised tests**
- **Diagnostic tests**
- **Assessment by psychologist**

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Standardised tests

- The following tests are used
 - Sigma-T Maths - May each year from 1st to 6th
 - Drumcondra English - May each year from 1st to 6th classes.

- The purpose of the standardised tests is to allow teachers to make placement and progress decisions based on assessment results and to develop appropriate interventions for certain children.
- The Learning Support teacher in consultation with the class teacher and the principal is responsible for purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing.
- Class teachers within bands swop classes and administer the standardised tests. In the event that a pupil is absent on the day of the test the Learning Support teacher will administer the test at a later date. Pupils may be excluded from the tests if in the view of the Special Educational Team they have a SEN which would prevent them taking test or newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting test would be inappropriate.
- Each child's raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN and Reading age 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 STen score is communicated to parents in the summer report and an explanation/descriptor will be provided with each result.
 - The results will help determine the allocation of learning support in the school. See SEN policy.

Screening:

- Screening tests used: refer to Assessment for Learning section
- Screening tests are administered throughout the school year and additionally as needed
- Class and/or Learning Support/Resource Teachers (LS/RT) administer tests and interpret results
- An Early Intervention teacher is provided for literacy and numeracy in Junior and Senior Infant classes. Refer to Whole School Procedures and Strategies in the SEN policy.
- Priority is given to pupils who score at or below STen 4 on standardised tests of achievements in Maths and English
- Class teacher and/or SEN team meet with parents/guardians when diagnostic testing considered necessary

Diagnostic Assessment:

- What formal diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties?
- Class Teacher (CT) and LSRTeacher select children for diagnostic assessment
- CT and/or SEN team meet with parents/guardians when diagnostic testing considered necessary
- LSRTeachers administer the diagnostic tests and interprets the results

CT, LS/RT collaborate to use test results to inform learning targets in pupils' Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) or Individual Educational Programme

CT, LS/RT collaborate to use test results to make informed decisions regarding which children should be referred for supplementary teaching

- Principal organises consultation with psychologist (NEPS or other) following collaboration with CT and/or LSRT

Psychological Assessment:

- Principal liaises with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required. Standard letters and consent forms are used.
- CT, LSRT, Principal and parents/guardians are responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from specialist? (Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, Audiologist, other...)
- SEN team collaborate to use assessment results to draft an educational plan for a pupil
- Psychological reports are stored in the Principal's office in filing cabinet with limited access. Refer to Data Protection Policy.

Recording the results of assessment

- Test results are recorded on class record sheets and these are stored according to school practices and the Data Protection Act.
- Access to records will be determined by school policy on record keeping and the Data Protection Act. See page 95, Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, NCCA (2007)
- Children's standardised test results will be recorded on school database.
- Teachers have agreed terminology for reporting on children's progress and achievement. Comments and observations will be recorded in an objective and instructive manner.
- Arrangements for the transfer of appropriate information based on assessments include: informal and formal P/T meetings, IEP meetings, written report end of year, primary to secondary school handover meetings, pupil profile reports. Refer to timetable in SEN policy.
- Assessment information will be safely stored to facilitate access to it by former pupils at any stage until their 21st birthday

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 school year.

Roles and Responsibility - Refer to SEN policy

Implementation Date -

Timetable for Review

The policy will be reviewed annually Sept/Oct Staff meeting.

Ratification & Communication

This assessment policy was officially ratified by the BoM on

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
- *Working together to Make a Difference for Children*, NEPS
- *Drumcondra English Profiles*. G. Shiel & R. Murphy, ERC, 2000
- *Commonsense Methods for Children with Special Needs*, Peter Westwood, Routledge Falmer, 1997
- A range of assessment tests are listed on the SESS website www.sess.ie
- Draft Report Cards Templates. www.ncca.ie
- info@ncca, September 2005. Issue 1, p. 8. Assessment for Learning