

Assessment Policy

Introduction:

Assessment is integral to all areas of the curriculum and it encompasses the diverse aspects of learning ... In addition to the products of learning, the strategies, procedures and stages in the process of learning are assessed. Assessment includes the child's growth in self-esteem, interpersonal and intrapersonal behaviour, and the acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. (Primary School Curriculum, 1999, page 17)

School Ethos:

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and there is an emphasis on the creation of a positive learning environment. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved. Gortskehy National School seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued.

Aims and Objectives:

The primary objectives of the policy are;

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning and identify pupils with learning difficulties.
2. To create a procedure for monitoring achievement
3. To track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
4. To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses
5. To evaluate pupil achievement in curricular areas in comparison with the national norms.

Policy Content:

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils, including the exceptionally gifted so that adequate strategies are put in place early enough to facilitate remediation. This policy sets out to formalise our existing practice within the school and takes on board the Department of Education's publication on assessment entitled 'Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum (2007).'

A broad continuum of modes of assessment is necessary in order to create a picture that will reflect the full range of the child's progress, attainment and development. Such a continuum include

- teacher observation
- teacher designed tasks and tests
- work samples, portfolios and projects
- standardised tests
- diagnostic tests

No single form of assessment is adequate in developing a comprehensive profile of the child. 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 and the school report issued at the end of the school year. Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing.

Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning

Stage 1: Classroom Support

A class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. Screening measures, which may include standardised, norm-referenced test for pupils and behavioural checklists, will be administered, where appropriate. All children are screened in May each year.

The class teacher in consultation with the child's parent/guardian and member of the support team will draw up a short, simple eight week plan for extra help to be provided. This ***continuum of support*** is implemented within the normal classroom setting and at home, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management. The success of the classroom support plan will be reviewed with appropriate parental involvement. If, after this review, concern remains, the special education support team in the school will be consulted about the desirability of intervention at Stage II.

Stage II: School Support

If intervention is considered necessary at Stage II, then the pupil will be referred to the Special Education Teacher with parents' permission, for further diagnostic testing. If this diagnostic assessment suggests that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this will be arranged. ***The parents and the class teacher will be involved with the S.E.T. in drawing up the learning programme, which would include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in the classroom, and during supplementary teaching.*** The Special Education teacher and the class teacher will review, after the 1st instructional term, in consultation with parents, the rate of progress of each pupil receiving supplementary teaching. If significant concerns remain, then it may be necessary to provide interventions at Stage III.

In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be needed. In these cases the pupil's needs will, with parents' permission, be discussed with the relevant NEPS psychologist and/or the case should be referred to

the clinical services of the Health Services Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management programme, to be implemented at home and in class, or to referral for further specialist assessment. (Stage III)

Stage III: School Support Plus

Some pupils who will continue to present with significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at Stage III. The school may formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school in respect of pupils with learning difficulties or with mild or moderate behavioural problems (or both) who have failed to make progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme and in respect of pupils with serious emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc.

The SET and the class teacher, in consultation with the relevant specialist or specialists will then draw up a learning programme that includes identification of any additional resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme. *The parents will be fully consulted throughout this process.* This programme will be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary

In implementing the School Support Plan & Plan Plus, the SETs -

- Develop an Individual Profile and Group / Individual Learning Programme for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with class teachers and parents. (School Support)
- Maintain a monthly record of work for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of learning support.
- Co-ordinate the implementation of the selection criteria for supplementary teaching as detailed in this policy.
- Contribute to the development of policy on Learning-Support at whole school level.
- Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books and materials. Responsibility for the purchase of materials rests with the SET.
- Administer a range of formal and informal assessments and maintain records of the outcome of those assessments which are used to inform planning.
- Liase with parents when the School Support Plan is being:
 - Developed,
 - Reviewed, or
 - Discontinued

Screening & Testing

Screening

From Senior Infants upwards, pupils are screened annually in May using appropriate Standardised Tests including M.I.S.T, Sigma T & Micra T.

Junior Infants are observed by the class teacher throughout the year. Baseline Early Years Assessment is used at the start of each year on all Junior Infants to assess Language & Communication, Literacy & Mathematics. MIST and SWST are administered to Senior Infants annually in May. The Non Reading Intelligence Test is administered annually to pupils from 1st to 6th class in Term 1.

Standardised Testing Screening / Supplementary Teaching

Priority will be given to pupils who are performing at or below the 10th percentile in English and Mathematics. The Continuum of Support as outlined in *Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers (DES 2007)* will be followed.

Results are communicated to parents at annual parent-teacher meetings and on the end of year school report.

Diagnostic Assessments & Screening Tests used (list is not exhaustive)

- Non Verbal Reasoning Intelligence Test (NRIT)
- Jackson Phonics Skills
- Schonell Graded Spelling
- Schonell Reading
- Dolch Words
- Jolly Phonics Assessments
- Drumcondra English Profiles
- Bangor Dyslexia Test (Dyslexia)
- Baseline Early Years Assessment
- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile
- YARC (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension)
- SWST Reading Test
- Sound Linkage
- Steve Chinn “Trouble with Maths” Assessments

Recording:

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the school filing cabinet. This file records standardised test results and end of year reports and any further psychological assessments of the child. This file is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progresses through the system. Procedures are in place

to manage sensitive data. There is a filing cabinet in the SET room which holds all relevant documentation on each child with special educational needs. All such information is treated as confidential. However, parents may view any information held about their child by making an appointment with the class teacher and/or the learning support/resource teacher. No child is assessed by any outside party without parent's consent. Teachers treat all such information as confidential. Relevant psychological assessments/reports are transferred onto secondary school on receipt of parental consent.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The involvement of pupils in the development, implementation and review of their own learning programmes is an important principle underlying effective supplementary teaching.

A Pupil in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

- Become familiar with the learning targets that have been set for them in their learning programme.
- Be an active participant in his/her own learning programme, in L.S. sessions, in the classroom and at home.
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.

Programme Monitoring and Review

Pupil activities will be monitored during supplementary teaching and will be recorded on the monthly report. This will be done in consultation between the Principal, Class Teacher, Parents and S.E.T. There is ongoing monitoring of each pupil's progress in relation to the attainment of short term objectives using the weekly planning and progress record so that class teaching and supplementary teaching continue to be responsive to the pupil's needs at all times.

The pupil's progress is continually monitored. This review details progress made to date and culminates in a decision on the level of support that the pupil will need in the future, the form that that support will take, and where appropriate, a revision of the learning targets and activities in the child's support file.

Success Criteria:

This policy is considered successful if;

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- If assessment is used to inform teaching and planning.
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- The Special Education teacher has clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between all parties involved.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Mainstream and 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 Support. At School Support, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Teachers. The Principal assumes a primary role at Stage 3 (School Support Plus) when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open.

This Policy is a working document & will be reviewed annually.

Implementation Data:

This policy is effective from April 2018

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____