

Mount Sion Primary School

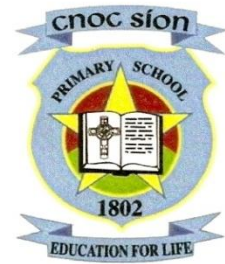
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Mount Sion Primary School Roll No. 19947U

Assessment Policy

Introduction:

This policy was formulated by the teaching staff in Autumn 2016 so as to have a transparent and uniform approach to assessment throughout the school. The P.D.S.T guidelines were used to assist in the drafting of this policy.

Rationale:

In order to ensure that all children in our school achieve to the best of their ability we believe it is imperative that any learning difficulties 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 helps the child 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 identify the early interventions required to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

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
- IEP boxes to provide continuity for pupil interventions (year to year)

(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

- Weekly spelling test Weekly table test
- Weekly SESE review (senior classes)
- 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

- KWL (Know, Want to know, Learned)

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

Standardised Testing:

Mount Sion Primary School uses Micra T and Sigma T standardised tests for Literacy and Numeracy respectively. All classes from First Class to Sixth Class are tested. The tests are usually administered in the second and last weeks of May by the class teacher.

Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in the administration office. The SET and Principal analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card and at parent / teacher meetings. The STEN score is used to explain results to parents.

Screening:

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 may include the BIAP or Drumcondra Profiles. The Ravens Test may be used where a child has little or no language.

In the middle term of Senior Infants the M.I.S.T test is administered by class teacher and LS teacher. This allows for the MIST follow-up programme to be rolled out thereafter.

From the end of First Class onwards Standardised Norm Referenced Tests are used, specifically Micra T Literacy, Sigma T Maths Tests. The Principal, in conjunction with all staff, analyses the results of these tests. The Learning Support teacher will then include the children in the LS timetable. The results of end of year testing are included in end of year reports.

On acceptance of LS parents sign a consent form.

The NRIT Screening test is carried out each year with 2nd and 4th classes. This test usually takes place in the autumn term.

A variety of screening tests have been developed to check for Emotional and Behavioural difficulties, Social Skills, ADHD, ASD (Australian Checklist for Autism).

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.

Diagnostic Tests administered include:

- Diagnostic Spelling test age 5 – 12, Crumpler & McCorty
- WRAT 4
- YARC – York Assessment of Reading & comprehension 5 - 11

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

Special Educational Needs

Outside Therapists

S< Assessments

OT Assessments

Physiotherapy Assessments

Play Therapy Assessments, we use a screening process to determine a pupil's need for a Play therapy intervention. A SDQ (Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire) screening is completed by the class teacher and parents.

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

Psychological Assessments:

A comparative analysis of the results of Standardised tests and the NRIT results is carried out by the Principal, Class Teacher and Support Teacher.

Each September a cohort of children will be identified for assessment/observation that academic year. The class teacher and/or Principal meet parents to inform them if their child is targeted for psychological assessment. This may be done on an ongoing basis throughout the school year. As assessment can be an emotive issue for parents discussion of assessment needs to be sensitive and patience exercised to allow parents time to digest and weigh up the potential outcomes of an assessment. If a child is to be considered for assessment it will be recorded on his Annual Summer Report after parents have been told orally.

The Principal will organise the assessment.

Children who present with possible SLT/OT 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.

The results of assessments will guide the drafting of an IEP for the pupil if appropriate. It determines the level of intervention either LS, General Allocation or an IEP.

The Principal will ensure that details of relevant reports are transferred with all 6th 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 booklets, 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 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 BOM to review overall school standards in Literacy/Numeracy. (No individual results will be identifiable)

Children with assessed conditions will have a Pupil Support File kept in a locked cabinet in each Resource Room.

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.

(d) During 2017/18 we will commence formally developing various assessment strategies as outlined in Assessment in the Primary School **Appendix A**, pages 84 – 94 and section 2, Classroom Assessment Methods pg 12-27.

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 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. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team. The Principal assumes a primary role at Stage 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:

This policy is effective from January 2017.

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____,
Br. Phil Ryan

Date: _____

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

References:

DES Circular 02/05 – 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

www.sess.ie

Working Together to make a Difference for Children – NEPS

Appendix A: Assessment in the Primary School

Appendix B: Circular 02/05