

Assessment Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy has been drafted by the Principal and teachers of the school to formalise and record assessment procedures in practice in the school, and to include any further requirements which relate to Circular 0018/2012, and those pertaining to Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

Rationale

The aim of the policy is to review and update current practice with regard to assessment, taking into account such publications as the Learning Support Guidelines 2000, NCCA Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum Guidelines 2007, NEPS A Continuum of Support 2007, Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011, School Self Evaluation Guidelines 2012, Circular 0018/2012 in addition to other relevant publications. It endeavours to identify at the earliest possible opportunity children who may have learning difficulties and to put in place a whole school response to meet their needs. An effective Assessment Policy is central to this core objective.

School Ethos

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child. Assessment strategies used in Knock National School contribute to teaching and learning throughout the school, it further identifies early intervention strategies that need to be implemented. Effective assessment strategies inform the teacher as to the child's individual needs and enables the teacher to differentiate to meet the needs of all children. This policy links with the school's mission statement whereby we aim to ensure that all children have equal access to the primary school curriculum.

Aims

The aims of the assessment policy are:

- 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, etc.

Content of Policy

The contents section of this policy is divided as follows:

1. Purposes of Assessment.
2. Assessment for Learning (Page 13 of NCCA Publication – Assessment in Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools).
3. Standardised Tests (Page 60 of NCCA Publication)
4. Screening.
5. Diagnostic Assessment.
6. Psychological Assessment.
7. Recording the results of assessment (Page 79 – 80 of NCCA Publication).

1. Purposes of Assessment

Assessment is about constructing an overall picture of a child's progress and learning across the Primary School Curriculum, over a period of time. Teachers gather information with regard to how a child learns, in addition to what they learn. This information is used to identify and celebrate the child's

current learning and attainment, and provide them with adequate support for future learning (NCCA Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum Guidelines, 2007).

Assessment strategies are used to:

- inform planning for, and coverage of, all areas of the curriculum
- gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
- identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils including the exceptionally able
- contribute to the school's strategy for prevention of learning difficulties, and allow for early intervention
- monitor pupil progress and attainment
- enable teachers to modify their programmes in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- compile records of individual pupils' progress and attainment
- facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
- facilitate the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work
- enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies, and adapt appropriately
- compliance with circular 0138/2006 and Circular 0018/2012

2. Assessment for Learning (*Refer to Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum Guidelines*)

The concept of assessment for learning (AfL) extends the potential of formative assessment. It emphasises the child's active role in her/his learning, in that the teacher and child agree what the outcomes of the learning should be, and the criteria for judging to what extent the outcomes have been achieved. In essence, AfL helps the teachers and children to focus on three key questions:

- Where are children now in their learning?
- Where are children going in their learning?
- How will children get to the next point in their learning?

This level of involvement in shaping their own learning can heighten children's awareness of themselves as learners and encourage them to take more personal responsibility for, and pride in, their learning. The teacher will use information from AfL to evaluate her/his teaching. Based on information gathered from the children, the teacher can make changes to her/his planning, organisational strategies, and teaching methodologies in order to make learning more successful for the children.

The following whole-school decisions have been made in relation to assessment for learning:

The eight assessment strategies described in the NCCA Assessment Guidelines, and listed below, are used formatively to improve teaching and learning throughout the school.

1. Self assessment
2. Conferencing
3. Concept maps
4. Portfolio assessment
5. Questioning (see Appendix A)
6. Teacher observation (see Appendix A)
7. Teacher designed tasks and tests
8. Standardised tests

Assessment strategies are used at the teacher's own discretion and a record of the strategies used is maintained in the monthly progress reports.

Self assessment is used incidentally by teachers on a daily basis. Children are also encouraged to self-assess their work when choosing samples for their portfolio. KWLs, concept mapping, rubrics and traffic lights are used in classes as a self assessment strategy. All teachers make a strong effort to help the children to develop their self-assessment skills.

Portfolios are maintained by children in all classes. Samples of pupils' work stored in portfolios are dated and children are encouraged to self-assess this work, using two stars and a wish or a similar strategy.

3. Standardised Tests

The following whole school decisions have been made in relation to standardised tests:

- Drumcondra Reading test will be used for measuring standards in reading from 1st class to 6th class.
- Sigma-T tests will be used for assessing standards in mathematics from 1st class to 6th class.
- All children will be tested each year. Testing will take place in the third term. As outlined in circular 0138/2006 the principal teacher may decide that a child will not be tested. This could happen in a case where the child does not have enough English to understand the test or if the child is unlikely to achieve any score on the test due to significant special educational needs. This will be accounted for on the record sheet and when reporting to the Department of Education and Skills.
- Standardised tests will be administered in all classes each year.
- Principal and the school secretary are responsible for ordering and purchasing the appropriate number and types of standardised tests.
- Each teacher will administer and correct the standardised tests for his/her class(es).
- Class-based score will be used for both Reading and Mathematics standardised tests.
- Results of standardised tests will be kept on the pupil file on Aladdin and record sheets will be stored in a central location as per Data Protection policy.
- The principal teacher, in consultation with the class-teacher and support teacher, will exempt a pupil from a standardised test if she/he feels that the pupil is unable to attempt any significant part of the test.
- The learning support/resource teacher will administer the test to those pupils who were absent when the test was administered by her/his class teacher.
- Overall school results will be analysed by the principal and discussed with the teaching staff. The school's results will be compared to standard distribution and presented to the Board of Management as per the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011.
- Each teacher will have class lists showing pupils' standardised test results in ascending order for Literacy and Numeracy. This information will be used by the teacher for the purpose of appropriately differentiating learning activities for pupils in the classroom. Information will also be used to inform the classroom support plan for individual children if the need arises.
- Results are communicated to parents in the end of year report card (NCCA Assessment Guidelines 2007) and verbally at the parent/teacher meeting using a STen score and descriptor.
- The table below (also contained in Appendix B) will be used for explaining test results to parents.

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STen Score	What the score means	Proportion of children who get this score	
8 – 10	Well above average	1/6	Top one-sixth of pupils
7	Above average	1/6	One-sixth of pupils
5-6	Average	1/3	Middle one third of pupils
4	Below average	1/6	One-sixth of pupils
1-3	Well below average	1/6	Bottom one-sixth of pupils

- Pupils at or below the 10th percentile will receive learning support. Literacy will be the main priority. The learning support teacher will prepare an IPLP (Appendix C) in consultation with the class teacher for children under the 10th percentile.

4. Screening: (Refer to Learning Support Guidelines, Circular 02/05, NEPS – SEN A Continuum of Support, Appendix D)

- Standardised tests will be used for the purposes of screening and to identify children who would benefit from early intervention strategies. Children in junior infants will be prioritised for learning support after Christmas if the need arises.
- The following screening tests are administered to all children in the final term of senior infants:
 - a. Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy.
 - b. Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy.
- The Non Reading Intelligence Test will be administered to all children at the end of first class and repeated in fourth class. The results of this test will also be used for screening purposes.
- The following will be administered by the learning support/resource teacher to individual children if necessary:
 - a. Non Verbal Reasoning test.
 - b. Dyslexic Screening Test – Junior.
 - c. Bangor Screening Test – Senior.
 - d. Schonell Single Word Spelling List.
- The results of the screening test are interpreted by the LSRT and the child's class-teacher and communicated to parents by the class teacher. The class teacher will outline any concerns which they have, and explain the rationale to the parent if there is a need to administer a Diagnostic Assessment.
- Information will also be used to inform the classroom support and/or school support plan for the child.

5. Diagnostic Assessment: (Refer to Learning Support Guidelines, Chapter 4, NEPS-SEN A Continuum of Support and Appendix D)

The following formal diagnostic tests are used by the LSRTs:

- a. Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy – Diagnostic.
 - b. Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy – Diagnostic.
 - c. PhAB 2 test.
 - d. Aston Index.
 - e. York.
- Class-teachers in consultation with LSRTs will decide which pupils should be diagnostically assessed. Parents will be informed prior to the administration of the test and permission sought. This will be recorded on Aladdin. The Principal will also be informed with regard to concerns surrounding an individual child's progress.
 - Diagnostic tests are administered by the LSRT, after consultation with parents.
 - The results are interpreted by the LSRT and the child's class-teacher and communicated to parents by the class teacher. The results of the test will help to inform future planning with regard to the

child's learning. Specific targets will be set and included in IPLP and subsequent IEP if there is a psychological assessment. Information will also be used to inform the school support plan for the child.

- If it is deemed necessary to consult a NEPs psychologist in relation to the results the Principal will perform this duty.

6. Psychological Assessment: *(Refer to Circular 02/05, NEPS-A Continuum of Support and Appendix C)*

- The class-teacher liaises with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required.
- The Principal is responsible for liaising with, requesting and arranging an assessment from specialists. (Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, Audiologist etc)
- The recommendations from a psychological assessment will be used to identify learning targets for an IEP.
- Psychological assessments are stored in a child's file which is stored centrally in the office. Copies of the psychological assessment and other assessments will be scanned to the child's file on Aladdin. This will be used for teacher reference.
- Parents will be furnished with a copy of the psychological assessment, either from the psychologist or the school. The class teacher will contact the parent to discuss the assessment, and long term implications with regard to the child's learning.

7. Recording the results of assessment: *(Refer to Data Protection Policy)*

Standardised test and NNRIT results are recorded manually and retained in a central location in the office, on the pupil profile card and electronically on Aladdin. These results are available to class teachers and LSRT. Recommendations from psychological assessments and other specialist reports should be used to identify specific learning targets for the child.

When a child transfers to post-primary their sixth class report and education passport will transfer with them, as per NCCA recommendations. The Principal will meet with post-primary personnel, if the need arises, to discuss necessary accommodations for children with specific needs.

If a child transfers to another primary school, the school will notify the secretary of Knock National School. The school need to send a written request with parental permission to access any specialist assessments on file. Alternatively, the parent(s) may ask the secretary/principal of Knock National School to provide the transfer school with a copy of any assessments on file.

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful if:

- Teaching and learning is improved as a result of the assessment practices and procedures outlined in the policy.
- Learning processes are carefully monitored in all classrooms.
- Baseline data is established and used to monitor individual pupil progress, and over-all school improvement, over time.
- Parents and pupils are involved in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- Adequate guidelines are given in the policy to assist teachers with the process of forming their long-term and short-term plans.
- Assessment procedures are efficiently and effectively implemented on a whole-school basis.

Roles and Responsibilities

Individual	Responsibility
Class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom support (Stage 1) • Administering standardised tests • Reporting test results to parents • Recording results of assessments on Aladdin and Pupil Profile Card • Pupil report card • Maintenance of portfolio • Transfer of information between teachers • Working collaboratively with the LSRT.
Learning Support/Resource teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School support (Stage 2) • School support plus (Stage 3) • Administering diagnostic tests • Whole school analysis of standardised tests • IPLPs/IEPs • Working collaboratively with the class-teachers, resource-teacher and principal-teacher.
Principal teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaising with class teachers and LSRT re School Support • Liaising with NEPS Psychologist and other specialist services • Whole school analysis of standardised tests • Co-ordination of policy implementation • Initiating review of the policy

Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented from November 2016.

Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed in June 2018 or in advance of that date if the teachers feel that this is necessary.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was officially ratified by the Board of Management of Knock National School on 19th October 2016. A copy of the policy will be made available to staff on the school plan website. The policy forms a component part of the school plan which is available for examination from all stakeholders, including parents.

Appendix A: NCCA Further Information on Classroom Assessment Methods

Appendix B: NCCA STen Score Information Leaflet

Appendix C: IPLP/IEP Template

Appendix D: School Support Plan and Classroom Support Plan Checklist