



Assessment Policy

Of Firhouse Educate Together National School

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Introduction and Rationale

The Introduction to the Primary School Curriculum (1999) identifies assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and emphasises the importance of assessing the process of learning as well as the product. The curriculum includes general guidelines on assessment for each subject and suggests a range of assessment tools that can be used for specific purposes. The school recognises its obligations under Article 22 of the Education Act “to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents”. The school staff including class teachers, SET (Special Education Teachers) team and ISA(Inclusion Support Assistant)/SNA(Special Needs Assistant)s were involved in drawing up this policy as the importance of a whole school approach to assessment was recognised by the staff. In planning a whole school assessment plan the spiral approach to assessment and the curriculum was taken into account.

The school has identified the following advantages associated with meaningful assessment in the primary school:

- Facilitates improved pupil learning.
- Creates a procedure for monitoring achievement.
- Tracks learning processes which assist long and short-term planning.
- Identifies areas of difficulty and indicates a course of action to overcome these.
- Highlights pupil needs which will inform future targets and learning outcomes.
- Helps to inform individual teacher plans as well as whole school planning.

If assessment is to be meaningful, it must be developed alongside learning activities so that it can reflect how pupils are learning, what pupils are learning and where the learning is taking them. Assessment is based on clearly defined skills or curricular activities.

The Focus of Assessment Approaches Utilised

- **Assessment of learning**

Assessment of learning focuses more on medium and long term assessment. Assessment of learning generally involves assessing a child's learning at the end of a given period, such as the end of a unit of work, a week, a term or a year. The emphasis in assessment of learning is on measuring a child's cumulative progress towards curriculum objectives,

Examples:

- Teacher designed tests and tasks
- Weekly tests i.e., spellings and table checklists
- Standardised Tests
- Diagnostic Tests

- **Assessment for Learning**

Assessment for learning is an on-going process of recognising and responding to the child's learning in order to enhance it. This involves engaging children in their own learning through questioning, and discussion and involving children in peer and self-assessment. The child's response to rich questions and his/her dialogue with the teacher and peers provide evidence of the child's learning which can be used to direct future learning. The quality of a child's response to a question can, for example, suggest further questions which lead the child to a greater understanding of an idea or concept. Central to the idea of the assessment for learning is the role of feedback in promoting children's awareness of and participation in their own learning. Feedback that is focused on the learning or task in hand, that indicates next steps and that points to achievement and challenges has been shown to be integral to children's classroom progress and confidence in learning.

Examples:

- Teacher Observations
- Teacher Questioning (lower and higher order)
- Discussion
- Work Samples
- Teacher designed tests and tasks
- Portfolio
- Self-assessment
- KWL (Know already / Want to know / Learning)
- Mind Maps
- Peer Assessment
- Standardised Test
- Diagnostic Test

Types of assessment that are utilised in the school

- **Formative Assessment:**

This provides both teacher and learner with information on the progress made and the next steps needed for the learning. This is “ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING” and is used by teachers and pupils.

- **Summative Assessment:**

This assessment takes place at the end of teaching and helps to inform teachers’ planning for the future.

- Weekly spelling tests
- Weekly Mental Maths Assessment
- Termly tests – numeracy and literacy (Dolch words, list of most commonly used sight words devised by Dr. Edward Dolch)

- **Self-Assessment:**

Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in their learning by self-evaluating and setting future targets. Self-assessment involves metacognition, the process of being aware of and reflecting on one’s own learning and learning style.

- Scoring rubrics
- Three stars and a wish

- **Peer Assessment:**

Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to evaluate and assess each other’s work. This is done across curricular subjects and can consist of:

- Marking work
- Questioning
- Giving constructive feedback
- Co-operative learning
- Setting targets
- Shared reading activities

- **Teacher Assessment:**

Teacher assessment is carried out on a daily basis. Most assessment is done informally. The following strategies are used:

- Observations
- Discussions
- Teacher devised tests in literacy and numeracy
- Questioning
- Developmental checklists

- Portfolios
- Projects work
- Guided reading

- **Diagnostic and Screening Assessment:**

The use of standardised tests in literacy and numeracy enables the detailed diagnosis of specific areas of pupils' learning by identifying both how well students are doing in some curricular areas and where they require more support. These tests can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of new curricula, teaching methodologies and resources. In doing so, the results from such tests should inform teachers' planning to ensure areas of the curricula, in need of development, are addressed.

Diagnostic and Screening Assessment:

The following diagnostic assessments and screening processes are to be implemented within the school. The results of these assessments will be kept on file and will become part of the pupil's school record.

- Micra T/Drumcondra Primary Reading Test and Sigma T/ Drumcondra Primary Maths Test are administered at the beginning of each academic year for 1st - 6th class. Results from these tests will help highlight pupils needing supplementary teaching.
- The MIST test (Middle Infant Screening Test) will be administered in the second term of Senior Infants. The Drumcondra Early Numeracy test will be administered in the third term of Senior Infants. Results from these tests will help highlight pupils needing supplementary teaching.
- NRIT: Non Reading Intelligence Test is used to assess background experience and ability. This will be conducted in the second term with children in 1st class, 3rd class and 5th class. Results from these tests will help highlight pupils needing supplementary teaching.
- The BIAP (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile)/Quest/Jackson Phonics/Neale Analysis etc. will be administered to pupils with undiagnosed learning difficulties who are identified as being in need of special education teaching.
- Baseline assessment, which measures literacy, language and mathematics on entry and at the end of Junior Infants, in a fun, friendly and engaging way using a tablet, is again being considered but is not yet in place.
- Cognitive Abilities Test 4: either a paper or online version, is designed to support schools in understanding pupils' developed abilities, likely academic potential and learning preferences. It measures the four principle areas of reasoning – verbal, non-verbal, quantitative and spatial. This will be conducted in the second term with children in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes where the need arises.

Administration of Screening Tests

- The Special Education Team (SET) is responsible for purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing
- The class teacher administers the standardised tests in coordination with the Special Education Team (SET)
- In the case of children with specific needs, the tests may be carried out on a one- to-one basis or within a small group

- Pupils who are not taking a test with their classmates complete the test in the SEN room under the supervision of the Special Education Team (SET) Teacher.
- The raw score, standard score, percentile rank, and STen (Standard Ten) scores are recorded. There is a uniform approach across all classes
- The SET and class teacher are involved in the analysis of results for an individual class. The SET and principal are involved in the analysis of results across a number of classes and at whole school level
- Information gathered from tests inform teaching and learning by showing pupils' areas of weakness and areas of strength in relation to national norms
- Results of the standardised tests from 1st-6th are communicated to parents in the end of year report card. The STen score (Standard Ten) is used to communicate results. An explanatory note is enclosed with the end of year report. Efforts are made to provide this sheet in the parent's mother tongue
- The results of these tests are used to inform the SET of those who require further diagnostic testing. Furthermore, they have bearing on the allocation of learning support hours in the school. Those who score below the 12th percentile in either English or Maths are prioritised for learning support

Administration of Diagnostic Assessment:

Formal diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties.

- The class teacher and SET are involved in selecting pupils for diagnostic assessment
- In some cases, parents are consulted in writing prior to diagnostic assessment. This parental consent is given to them by the class teacher. However, diagnostic assessment may be carried out prior to consultation with the parents. Parents will be informed of the results.
- The SET administers the diagnostic tests
- The class teacher and SET interpret the results
- If it is felt necessary to consult a psychologist (NEPS or other) about diagnostic test results, the SET, principal and/or parents arrange for such consultation

Psychological Assessment:

- The Principal, Special Education Team, and class teacher liaise with parents/guardians if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required
- The principal or SET teacher is responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from specialists (e.g. Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, Audiologist, etc...)
- The assessment plays an important role in drafting an educational plan for a pupil as it identifies areas of weakness and strength as well as providing recommendations for learning
- Psychological reports are stored in the individual pupil's file in the principal's filing cabinet and the SEN room. The Principal and the SET Teacher controls access to them

Timetable of Assessment:

- **Junior Infants:**

Throughout the school year our school designed assessment of writing progression steps to be highlighted as each child achieves each level as per Language Curriculum.

School Designed Assessment Portfolio for each child to be completed. Components identified to be completed each term. Milestones not already met to be checked again in the following term.

School Designed Assessment/Checklist for each child to be completed at the end of the year. Belfield Infant Assessment Profile may be administered to identify areas of need for some students following attendance for at least one term in school.

- **Senior Infants:**

Throughout the school year our school designed assessment of writing progression steps to be highlighted as each child achieves each level as per Language Curriculum.

Term One: Assessment portfolio and checklist for literacy and numeracy milestones.

Term Two: MIST, assessment portfolio and checklist for literacy and numeracy milestones

Term Three: Drumcondra Early Numeracy test; assessment portfolio and checklist for literacy and numeracy milestones;

- **1st Class – 6th Class:**

Throughout the school year our school designed assessment of writing progression steps to be highlighted as each child achieves each level as per Language Curriculum.

Term One: assessment portfolio and checklist for literacy and numeracy milestones

Term Two: assessment portfolio and checklist for literacy and numeracy milestones; NRIT for 1st, 3rd and 5th classes; Cognitive Abilities Test: measures the four principle areas of reasoning – verbal, non-verbal, quantitative and spatial. This will be conducted with children in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes where the need arises.

Term Three: Standardised Tests in Maths and English: Drumcondra; assessment portfolio and checklist for literacy and numeracy milestones

- **6th Class:** NCCA Education Passport: 6th class Report Card, My Profile Sheet, My Child's Profile Sheet: materials will be used to transfer pupil information to the relevant post-primary school at the end of 6th class, following confirmation of enrolment. (See www.ncca.ie/transfer)

In addition to the above the BIAP/Quest/Jackson Phonics/Neale Analysis will be administered to pupils with undiagnosed learning difficulties who are identified as being in need of learning support.

Record Keeping:

Under the Education Act (1998), parents have a right to be informed of their child's progress. Schools will at times need to share assessment information with a range of people including parents, teachers in other schools and other professionals associated with the education of the child. It is important, therefore, that assessment information is readily communicable to such a varied audience.

Reporting:

Schools are obliged, under Part 7 of DES Circular 0056/2011: ‘Reporting and Using the Results of Assessments to Improve Pupil Learning’, to report information from standardised tests to parents, the school Board of Management, the Department of Education and Skills and to another school if a pupil moves there.

Reporting to Parents:

Parents are informed of their children’s progress in the following ways:

- **Formal:**
 - Annual Parent-Teacher meetings
 - Written end of year report
 - Other meetings may be arranged throughout the year, should the need arise
- **Informal:**
 - Notes/letters home
 - Informal chats in morning and at collection time
 - Project work, class work sent home to show progress

This policy has implications for other policies and procedures in the school e.g. Inclusion/SET, Data protection and Reports to parents.

Review:

This policy is a working document and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Reviewed: 10th May 2021

Date of Next Review: May 2022

A copy of the policy is shared with teachers and is available for parents on the school website.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by: Firhouse Educate Together Board of Management on 10th May 2021.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Francis Fullen: Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Collette Dunne: Principal, Firhouse ETNS