

Ballyfin N.S
Whole School Plan
On Assessment

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Policy on Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in development knowledge skills and attitudes.

From National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (N.C.C.A.)

Assessment is an integral part of effective teaching and learning.

The purpose of assessment is to provide information for a range of audiences.

Assessment in Ballyfin N.S. will be -

- **Positive**
- **Manageable**
- **Useful and used.**
- **Consistent.**

It should be noted that assessment is a tool for development and not an end in itself.

Aims of our Policy :

- To provide a description of students learning.
- To obtain information about the pupils mastery of curricular objectives.
- To provide information to the teacher which can be used in curricular planning.
- To identify learning strengths.
- To provide early identification of literacy/numeracy difficulties and their causes.
- To provide screening and appropriate placement.
- To provide information to pupils, parents and relevant agencies.
- To compare with national norms.
- To contribute to programme evaluation.

Assessment will be used in the following ways :

- **Formative** - the information gained “forms” or affects the next learning experience.*
- **Diagnostic** - finding out what attitudes, knowledge, understanding or skills are not properly learned or acquired and therefore preventing pupils making the expected progress.
- **Evaluative** - informing the strategic planning and direction of the whole school by evaluating the impact of planning, teaching and the curriculum on pupils achievements.
- **Summative** - Systematic recording of information which leads towards a summary of where the pupils have reached at a point in time. This is essential for identifying progress over time.

- **Procedures/Guidelines:**

Approaches :

- Assessment ranges from informal to formal.
- Formative assessment takes place during the course of instruction and the information gathered is used by the teacher to improve instruction and learning.
Summative assessment will take place on an ongoing basis at the end of a course.

Reporting:

- Self-referenced information -the child may be judged relative to previous performance.
- Criterion - referenced information - child may be judged relative to a set of learning objectives in an area of the curriculum
- Norm-referenced information - child may be judged relative to other children on a national norm.

Methods Used in our School :

- Classroom observation and questioning of pupils.
- Checking homework.
- Formal/Informal tests set by the teacher.
- Standardised norm-referenced tests.
- Diagnostic testing carried out by the S.E.T. team.

Time of Testing:

- Informal testing is done on an ongoing basis.
- At infant level assessments generally takes the form of checklists/profiles.
- Standardised Tests are administered by the class teacher/S.E.T. person at the end of the school year, from senior infants to sixth class.

National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS).

In the area of Special Needs Education N.E.P.S. have introduced guidelines for schools called "A Continuum of Support".

It encompasses a graduated problem solving model of assessment and intervention in schools comprised of three distinct school based processes:

1. Classroom Support.
2. School Support.
3. School Support Plus.

(see Special Education Needs) - A Continuum of Support - Booklet.

The Non-Reading Intelligence Test (N.R.I.T), a diagnostic test, is carried out by the S.E.T. team in the month of April., in senior infants, second class and fifth class.

- Sometimes testing will take place at the end of a unit of instruction.
- Testing may also take place during the school year if a pupil is referred to the Learning Support Teacher as a result of parent/class teacher concerns about their performances or level of attainment.
- Testing may also be administered if a child transfers from another school and does not have the relevant tests carried out in their previous school. This will help facilitate appropriate placement.
- Testing may also be done to facilitate referral to outside agencies, (N.E.P.S.) Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist etc
- Assessment carried out by the various agencies listed above and the recommendation in them will be used to guide teachers and S.E.T. to plan work and teaching approaches for those children with special needs.

Implementation of Standardised Tests:

- Class teacher/S.E.T. person administers Standardised Tests.
- Any child absent on the day of the test may have it administered at a later date by the S.E.T. team, if possible.
- Percentile rankings on Standardised Reference Tests help in selecting pupils for Diagnostic Assessment by the S.E.T. team.

Reporting to Parents :

A variety of reporting methods are used.

- End of week/term/year test results which are designed by the teachers in our school may be sent home to parents i.e.. Parents are asked to sign test results.
- Verbal reporting to parents at the annual parent/teacher meetings.
- Communicate results of tests carried out during the year by setting up specially arranged meetings with parents as the need arises.
- Specially arranged meetings may be set up where a teacher/parent have concerns about the result of a test.
- The percentile rank results and STEN scores may be given and explained at parent/teacher meetings
- However percentile ranks (rather than STEN scores) will appear on the end of year report.
- The following grid appears on our final newsletter in June as a means of explanation for parents.

Interpreting STEN scores for parents

STEN Score Range	Description	Coverage
8 - 10	Well above average	Top one sixth of pupils
7	High average	One sixth of pupils
5 - 6	Average	Middle one third of pupils
4	Low average	One sixth of pupils
1 - 3	Well below average	Bottom one sixth of pupils

Standardising Testing

Drumcondra Reading Test - English

Drumcondra Spelling Test- English

Sigma T– Maths

At present these are the standardised tests which are administered in our school in May of each year.

Percentile Explanation:

85/% = 85th percentile. This means a child with this score has surpassed approximately 85% of children of his/her age at a national level.

8% = 8th percentile. This means a child has performed better than only 8% of children of his/her age at a national level.

Not to be confused with $\frac{100}{100}$ or $\frac{100}{100}$ in tests set by class teacher.

STEN Explanation :

A STEN score is a type of standardised score. The STEN scale (Standard TEN) as the name implies, is a ten - point scale with values ranging from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

Storage of Reports/Tests Results :

- Standardised Tests results are highly confidential.
- A copy of the results is stored on file in a lockable cabinet in the administration office .
- Reports on Assessment administered by other professionals in outside agencies ie Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Consultants etc. are also kept on file in a lockable cabinet in the photocopying room. (A room off the administration office).

Resources in our School :

- Standardised Tests : - Sigma T
 - Micra T
 - Drumcondra Primary Reading Test.
 - Drumcondra Spelling Test
 - N.R.I.T.
 - N.C.C.A - Assessment in the Primary School.
(Curriculum Guidelines for Schools)

Diagnostic Tests:

- Phonological Awareness Screening Test.
 - Non-Reading Intelligence Test (N.R.I.T.).
 - Neale Analysis of Reading and Comprehension.
 - Psycho - Educational Profile 3 (P.E.P.3) (Assessment for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders).
 - QUEST - Under 8s Screening/Diagnostic Tests for Maths/English.
 - COPS LUCID
 - RAIN - sentence reading test.
 - Dolch List
 - Norman France Maths Profile (9 - 12 years).
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- **Other resources** - Primary Schools Assessment kit
 - Circular 138/2006 Supporting Assessment in Primary Schools.

Evaluations :

The effectiveness of each form of testing will be reviewed at all levels within the school.

The overall policy itself will be subject to periodic reviews.

Concluding Comment:

This policy statement has been revised and updated based on conditions existing in the school at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised or updated at a future date so as to comply with any changes in conditions.

All amendments and updates will be recorded in the Assessment Policy

Signed : Patrick B. Hennessy
Chairman B.O.M.
Ballyfin N.S

Date : 07/10/2009