



## **Kilkenny School Project**

### **Assessment Policy**

#### **Introduction & Rationale**

Assessment refers to all activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning (PSC, 1999). This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils so that adequate strategies are put in place early enough to facilitate meeting their needs. Kilkenny School Project is focussed on best practice for assessment, both “of learning” and “for learning.”

We follow the four key pillars of the Educate Together ethos, that is – multi-denominational, child-centred, democratic and co-educational and our school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each individual child, encouraging them to achieve to the best of their ability and experience success at school.

#### **Aims:**

The primary aims of the policy are:

- To enhance pupil learning
- To facilitate reflective teaching and inform teachers’ short and long term planning
- To create a procedure for monitoring achievement
- To highlight difficulties in learning in order to provide intervention strategies
- To identify gifted and highly able children who require extension activities
- To identify how individual children learn and process information
- To have a cohesive plan on assessment throughout the school

- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
- To facilitate the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work
- To keep records of attainment that will inform the reporting process

### **Approaches to assessment**

The school follows the NCCA guidelines on Assessment in the Primary Classroom and all aspects of the school curriculum are assessed, with procedures in accordance with those outlined in each curricular area in the Primary School Curriculum.

Assessment methods are teacher-led but range from informal (such as teacher observation) to formal (such as diagnostic screening for learning difficulties). Sometimes assessments are carried out solely by the teacher but sometimes the input of children is required also. (teacher-designed pupil self-assessment)

Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL) are used by teachers. Assessment is ongoing and appropriate to children's needs and available resources.

Teachers will also have one or more of the following in their classrooms to track assessment:

- a specific assessment folder
- a section within their own plans for recording of assessment
- portfolio of work from children
- electronic medium for recording assessment

### **Assessment of Learning:**

The focus here is on medium and long term assessment. It generally involves assessing a child's learning at the end of a given period, such as at 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 progress towards curriculum objectives.

Examples include:

- Teacher designed tests and tasks
- Weekly tests i.e. table checklists, spellings
- Monthly tests i.e. Spellings for Me
- Standardised Tests
- Diagnostic Tests
- Reading Recovery Assessment Tests

### **Assessment for Learning:**

Assessment for Learning is an ongoing process of recognising and responding to the child's learning in order to enhance it.

The following types of informal assessment methods are used in the school:

- Teacher observations
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Termly tests in core subject areas
- Questioning (lower and higher order)
- Discussion and conferencing- chatting with a child (one to one) on a topic, question or strategy to assess understanding
- Work samples, portfolios and projects
- Checklists
- Reading Recovery Assessment Tests
- Running Records
- Mind maps
- Self assessment- Emoji's, Thumbs up/down, circle the best letter/word completed, Rubrics, KWL, Two stars and a wish, self-assessment folders,
- Peer assessment through pair work and discussion. Oral feedback e.g. to writing or during looking and responding.

### **Screening**

The screening methods used to identify learning strengths and needs by class teachers in our school are:

- Teacher observation (throughout the year)
- Use of homework, teacher-designed tests & projects (throughout the year)
- Standardised Tests listed above
- New Non Reading Intelligence Test (when requested)
- Ballard & Westwood
- BIAP (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile)
- Behaviour Checklists (as needed)

## **Standardised Testing**

Standardised testing takes place in the third term of each school year to pupils from 1st - 6th class. Scores are used in order to identify pupils for additional support the following school year. The school uses the following tests from 1st -6th class:

- Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (DPRT) is used to assess attainment in literacy
- SIGMA - T is used to assess attainment in numeracy

### **How does the data from standardised tests inform teaching and learning?**

The outcomes of testing are used to monitor pupils' progress. These are then used to inform classroom planning or as part of the decision to give extra support to children. Teachers compare standardised test scores from one year to the next to see how a child is progressing.

Concerns are discussed with the SET team and interventions are made.

When children score below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile, further diagnostic assessment may be used to explore where their difficulties lie.

### **Administration of Standardised Tests**

- The Deputy Principal is responsible for the purchase and distribution of standardised tests, teachers manuals and correcting stencils.
- The class teacher administers the Standardised Tests in coordination with the SET.
- The choice of standardised tests is reviewed regularly by the teaching staff.
- Results of standardised tests from 1st - 6th are communicated to parents/guardians in the end of year school report. The STen (Standard Ten) is used to communicate results. In 1st class an information sheet is sent home to parents/guardians which explains about standardised testing and scores.
- If a pupil is absent on the day of testing the test will be administered to them by a SET at the earliest convenient date
- 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.
- Some individual pupils may be exempt from standardised testing arising from their needs.
- The SET teachers and principal are involved in the analysis of results across a number of classes and at the whole school level

## **Diagnostic Assessment**

If a child requires learning support a range of assessments will be administered by a member of the SET following referral by the class teacher in consultation with parents / guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by DES Circular 02/05 where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing / psychological assessment. Parents will be provided with test results and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission will be sought and a consent form will be completed.

The diagnostic tests used in the school include:

- Dyslexia Screening Test
- NRIT (New Non Reading Intelligence Test)
- BIAP (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile)
- CAT4 (Cognitive Abilities Test 4)

## **Administration of Diagnostic Assessments:**

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
- Parents/Guardians are consulted in writing prior to Diagnostic Assessment. This parental consent form is given to them by the SET/class teacher.
- The SET administers the diagnostic tests
- The class teacher and the 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/guardians arrange for such consultation.

## **Psychological Assessment:**

- The Principal, SET and class teacher liaise with parents/guardians if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment by external agency is required.

- The principal or SET teacher, with parental agreement, is responsible for requesting a referral to relevant outside agencies (Speech and Language, Occupational Therapist, NEPS etc.)
- The assessment plays an important role in drafting an individual education plan for the pupil as it identifies areas of weakness and strength as well as providing recommendations for learning.
- Applicants will be prioritised in consultation with the agencies involved ( for example, NEPS.)

### **Reporting**

In line with the DES Circular 0056/2011 schools are obliged to report information from standardised tests to parents/guardians (individual scores), to the school Board of Management and Department of Education and Skills (overall scores for classes 2nd, 4th, 6th) and to another school if a pupil moves there.

### **Reporting to Parents/Guardians:**

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

- Formal: Annual Parent-Teacher meetings, written end of year report, any other meetings arranged throughout the school year should the need arise.
- Informal: Notes/letters/Emails home, Informal chats (morning/collection time), children's work sent home to show progress and homework.

### **Management, Storage and Archiving of Records**

- The school maintains assessment records for each pupil. All end of year reports and standardised tests (for the current and previous school year) are filed annually in a secure filing cabinet.
- Reports from outside agencies are stored centrally in the office in a locked filing cabinet and are attached to the child's profile on Aladdin (password encrypted).
- Standardised test results and end-of-year reports are also stored digitally on Aladdin which is password protected and with restricted access (for parents and relevant teachers).
- Staff work in partnership at all times and strive to share relevant information about children.
- SET teachers follow the Continuum of Support Guidelines and appropriate plans and records are maintained for each stage of the process. These are stored centrally in the office and in the SET rooms in locked filing cabinets.

- Assessment and other information on individual children will be safely archived and retained for as long as is necessary under the terms of the school's Data Protection policy.

### **Success Criteria**

The school wide implementation of this policy will ensure:

- A range of formal and informal assessment strategies are used to ensure assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning
- Procedures are efficient and effective because there is clarity about expectations and responsibilities

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The following people have particular responsibilities for aspects of this policy:

- Class Teacher: Responsible for all assessment in his/her class including the administration, correction and recording of tests as outlined for classes. Scores on standardised tests are recorded on Aladdin.
- SEN Teacher: Responsible for the administration, correction and recording of diagnostic tests on advice from the class teacher and passes on the test results to class teachers. SEN staff will also assess pupils on a regular basis.
- Principal: Responsible for ensuring that these procedures are enacted and that an agreed assessment strategy is in place. In doing so, the Principal will be supported by the Deputy Principal.
- BoM: Responsible for ensuring that this policy is in place and up-to-date, and has been formulated with the full input of teaching staff and Principal. It is also responsible for supporting the Principal in the execution of the school's agreed assessment strategy.
- Parents and Guardians: Parents and Guardians also have a key role to play in supporting their children's learning by providing the school with relevant information about their children and by cooperating with any individualised strategies put in place to optimize their children's learning and integration in the school community.

### **Implementation Date**

This policy was implemented in January 2022.

### **Timetable for review**

The operation of the new policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended.

### **Ratification and Communication**

The policy was circulated to the members of the Board of Management prior to meeting in Term 2 2022 at which it was formally ratified.

Notification that the plan is available for viewing will be communicated to the parents/guardians in the next School Bulletin. It will be available for viewing on the school website.

Ratified by Board of Management on \_\_\_\_9<sup>th</sup> March 2022\_\_\_\_

Signed *Sonya Lanigan*

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Chairperson, Board of Management

### **Appendix**

Link to NCCA Assessment: <http://action.ncca.ie/>