

Policy on Assessment and Evaluation

Introduction

This policy on assessment in Scoil an Fhraoich Mhóir is a redrafting of the school policy on assessment as recommended by the Whole School Evaluation conducted in the school in 2011. The policy is based on the guidelines issued by the NCCA to primary schools entitled Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum.

Rationale

The Education Act 1998 requires schools to, *regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents*. In fulfilling this requirement our school has developed assessment procedures which seek to provide an accurate account of each child's progress and achievement. This policy sets out how our school will use assessment to meet the needs of pupils, teachers, parents and other relevant parties.

Relationship to our School Ethos

Our school is a Catholic school which seeks to provide a holistic education in an environment of care, respect and equality where all members of the school community are continuously involved in learning. Hence our motto, *together we learn*.

Purpose of the Policy

The primary purposes of this policy are:

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning
2. To create a procedure for monitoring achievement
3. To track learning processes which assist teachers in their planning
4. To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis
5. To involve parents and pupils in the assessment process
6. To cater for different learning styles
7. To fulfil the school's legal requirements

Policy Content – The Assessment Process in our school

Why children's learning is assessed in our school:

Assessment is part of good teaching and learning. It provides the teacher with information on each child which helps the teacher to see what and how the child is learning. This information enables the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the child's learning and to adapt teaching methods and learning activities as appropriate. This hopefully makes learning a more enjoyable and challenging experience for the child and a more rewarding one for the teacher.

What we assess in our school:

All curriculum areas are assessed in our school. A variety of different methods are used according to the area being assessed. Assessments seek to assess the knowledge a child acquires, the skills the child learns, the attitudes and values the child develops and the dispositions the child shows.

When we assess in our school:

Assessment in our school is an ongoing process from the moment a child enrolls with us until they leave the school.

In the early years assessment is an informal and natural part of the teacher's interactions with the children. Much assessment takes place through observations of the child, discussions with the child and active listening to the child in a variety of learning situations. As the infant years provide the foundation for subsequent learning the school places an emphasis on identifying and assisting children who experience learning difficulties. An initial screening of pupils is undertaken through the school application form. This is followed up with group and individual meetings with new parents as required before children commence in the school. After enrolment new infants are monitored closely and any issues of concern identified by the school are discussed with parents. In some instances the school will conduct the BIAP and/or organise appropriate supports based on the Staged Model of Intervention. This model involves the teacher working with parents, the NEPs psychologist and where necessary organising learning support/resource teaching and/or access to various therapies for the child.

All Senior Infants are screened in their fifth term in school using the MIST. The information acquired from this test, together with the teacher's day to day observations provides an assessment of the child's strengths and needs. The senior infant teacher meets with all parents following this test and makes recommendations to improve learning where needed.

From 1st class to 6th class standardised tests are administered to all children at the end of the school year in literacy and numeracy. The results of these tests are reported to parents in written form in the end of year report. The results are also discussed with parents at the formal parent-teacher meetings each November.

2nd and 5th class are assessed each year using the NRIT. The purpose of this assessment is to compare the children's scores against other assessments to ascertain whether they are working to their potential.

The results of assessments are analysed both at the end and start of the school year by class teachers, the SET team and the school Principal. The information acquired facilitates improved teacher planning both for the individual child and the class, the prioritisation of children for learning(additional) support and assessment as well as highlighting areas in need of review.

How children's learning is assessed

For the teacher assessment involves gathering information to understand how each child is progressing in school and using that information to further the child's learning. Assessment goes far beyond just testing and is concerned with the daily interactions between teacher and child and involves many overlapping and often simultaneous activities.

In our school we focus on two principal approaches to assessment:

Assessment for Learning (Afl) & Assessment of Learning (Aol).

These interrelated and complementary approaches emphasise two aspects of assessment that are central to a teacher's work:

- The teacher uses evidence on an ongoing basis to inform teaching and learning (AfL). The child is actively involved in their own learning.
- The teacher periodically records children's progress and achievement for the purpose of reporting to parents, teachers and other relevant persons (AoL). It occurs at the end

of a given period and measures a child's cumulative progress towards curriculum objectives.

In assessing children in our school the following assessment methods are utilised:

- Self-Assessment
- Conferencing
- Portfolio Assessment
- Concept Mapping
- Questioning
- Teacher Observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Standardised Testing

Where assessment information is recorded in our school:

In fulfilling the requirements of the Education Act 1998 our school creates and maintains individual records of children's learning while they attend our school. Three kinds of record are maintained by the school:

1. The teacher's day to day records
2. The pupil's file
3. The report card
4. School management software system

The teacher's day to day records:

Each teacher normally keeps their own day to day record of observations, remarks, incidents etc. as they occur in the classroom and playground. These records provide the teacher with additional information on each child which helps the teacher to meet the needs of children more effectively. It also informs the teacher's classroom organisation.

Pupil File

The pupil file is created when the child enrolls in our school. It contains pertinent information such as contact details, enrolment data, attendance records, medical details, products of assessment, correspondence, professional reports, class documents, learning support/resource documents, copies of school reports etc. The main functions of the file are to support the school in catering for the needs of the child, to support teachers in monitoring and structuring learning and to provide information to teachers when preparing reports.

Report Card

The report card is an important element of the pupil file in which salient information regarding the child's educational progress and achievement is recorded. Its key purpose is to share assessment information with parents to facilitate them helping their children to learn.

School Management Software System

The school uses a cloud based school management software system called Aladdin schools. This system keeps a record of each child's personal details, attendance and standardised test results. The system allows the school to look at individual, group or school wide results and to make comparisons from year to year.

How we record assessment information:

The information entered into the pupil file or report card should be readily accessible and comprehensible. This entails clarity and consistency in recording and reporting assessment information from teacher to teacher in the school and in reporting to parents at different stages of their children's primary school education. This is also important with regard to the sharing of information with other schools. Assessment information is recorded in an objective, instructive and in so far as is possible a positive manner by staff.

With whom assessment information is shared:

Assessment information is shared with parents/guardians. Legislation also requires the school to report assessment information to other teachers, schools, the BoM, the DES and other individuals involved in a child's education. These include DES inspectors, NEPs psychologists, SENOs, EWOs and other professionals such as speech and language therapists and occupational therapists.

In general sharing of assessment information occurs with the consent of the parent/guardian and occurs in a meeting situation. As previously mentioned assessment results are communicated to parents twice yearly. One in written format, the end of year report, and one orally at the parent/teacher meetings in November. Outside these formal occasions parents are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher

For all other sharing of assessment information the school's preference where possible is to meet with the relevant professional so that a complete picture of the child can be presented. This is also the case when children are transferring schools however given the constraints of time and distance this is not always practicable. The school does transfer pupil data to other primary schools once a letter confirming enrolment has been received from the school. The school also transfers data to post primary schools in line with the procedures developed by the NCCA while also requesting a meeting regarding transferring pupils with the post primary school in question.

The length our school stores assessment data:

All information on children is stored in the pupils file. This file is stored in the school office for eight years after the pupil leaves the school. After eight years the file is destroyed.

Success criteria

This policy will be considered successful if:

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities understood
- Assessment information is shared efficiently and appropriately with relevant parties
- Assessment information is used to improve teaching and learning in each class and for each pupil

Implementation

This policy supersedes the school's previous policy on assessment and will be implemented upon ratification by the Board of Management.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 10th December 2014. A copy of the policy will be made available on the school website and from the school office.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. This policy was reviewed and ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 20th December 2016. The next review is scheduled for November 2019.