

Ardcroney N.S. Assessment Policy



Introduction & Rationale

While it is generally accepted that assessment has always been an integral part of primary school life in Ireland, it has been given statutory obligation in Section 22 (2) (b) of the Education Act 1998 which requires schools to "regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents." Thus in formulating this policy, this school understands assessment to be "...the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes". (Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools NCCA). The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy endeavours to identify at the earliest possible opportunity, children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a whole school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is an important aspect of this. This school aims to motivate pupils and encourages them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Definition of Assessment

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. This school is focused on best practice for assessment both "of learning" and "for learning."

Relationship to School Ethos

Our school mission statement states we strive to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure environment. In this school there is a recognition and value of the uniqueness and needs of all our pupils, parents and partners. that every child has an opportunity to be happy, safe and able to learn. The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of teaching processes. We believe that an effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that relative success, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved for all pupils.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aims and objectives of the policy are:

- *To facilitate reflective teaching and enhance pupil learning.*
- *To create a procedure for monitoring achievement.*
- *Identify areas of concern.*

- *To highlight difficulties in learning which inform intervention strategies.*
- *To identify gifted and able or talented children who require extension activities.*
- *To keep records of attainment that will inform the reporting process.*
- *To use validated assessment data to inform target setting and to raise expectations and standards.*

Principles

1. *Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment is to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.*
2. *Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.*
3. *The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organisation, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.*
4. *The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.*
5. *We recognise the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.*
6. *Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents, and other interested parties.*
7. *Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and should not be administratively burdensome.*

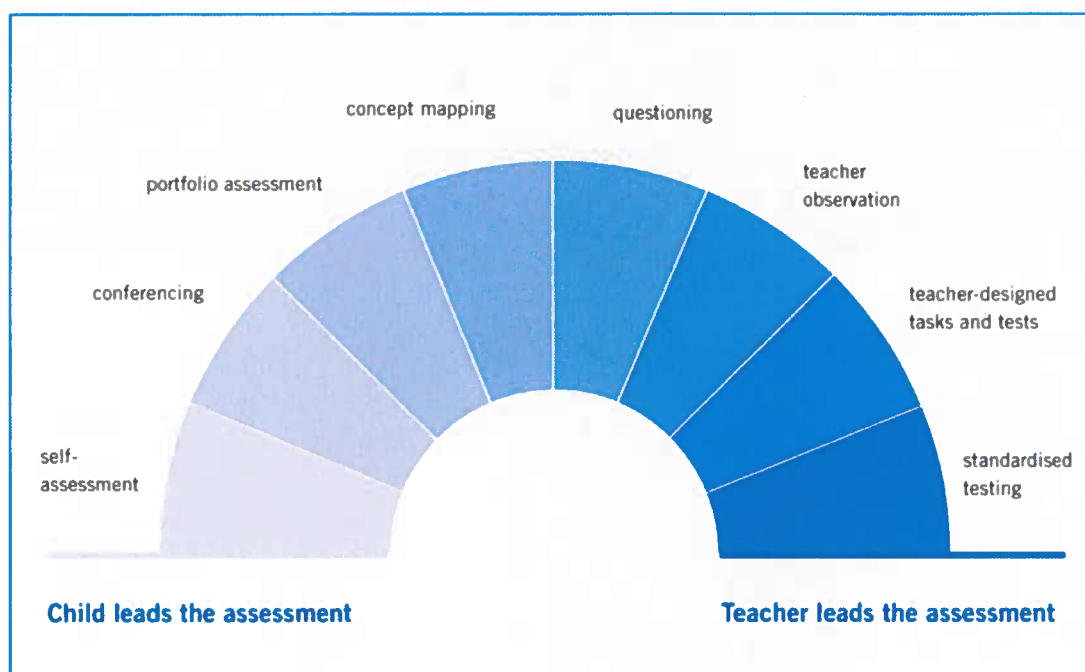
Policy Content

This policy is aimed towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils so that adequate strategies are in place early enough to facilitate remediation. These strategies may include child led and pupil led assessment methods and two way communication between parents and teachers including modification of teacher programmes through differentiation and Student Support Plans (see also SEN Policy).

Assessment Methods

How is learning assessed?

As part of the assessment process, a selection of assessment tools, as per A Continuum of Assessment methods (Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum) are chosen at the discretion of the teacher and will be used to help gain a clearer picture of the success of the teaching and learning in our school. Apart from the specific tests named below, a variety of assessment methods is used throughout the school, depending on the age of the pupils and the specific curricular area.



In general, the assessment methods used in this school are:

- *Teacher observation*
- *Teacher-designed tasks and tests*
- *Pupil projects and portfolios*
- *Pupil profiles*
- *Samples of pupils' work*
- *Record keeping*
- *Annual reports*
- *Checklists*
- *Standardised Tests*
- *Questioning*
- *Pupil Self-Assessment*
- *Peer Assessment*
- *Think/ Pair/Share*

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment for Learning emphasises the child's active role in his/her own 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. By interacting with the children in such a way, the teacher can gain invaluable information as to

how best to deliver the curriculum in their classroom. Every interaction has the potential to provide the teacher and children with a better idea of what they do or do not understand or can and can't do.

Many of these interactions are informal and are a continuous part of everyday classroom activities, in all classes, across the full curriculum.

They are used to identify what pupils have achieved, what might be affecting their progress and what strategies will best support their future learning. The information that such an assessment provides will also enable teachers to evaluate their own practice and make changes.

Assessment for Learning include:

Teacher Observation,

Conferencing (Teacher and Pupil, Pupil and Pupil, Teacher and Parent)

Self-assessment (Traffic Lights, Thumbs up and Down, Stickers, 2 Stars and A Wish, Self-Correction, Checklists).

Concept Mapping, Questioning, KWL (What I Know, what I Want to know, what I have Learned. WALT (we are learning to), WILF(what I am looking for)

Homework assignments

Parental feedback or observations

Teacher designed Tasks and Tests,

Standardised Testing and Diagnostic Testing.

Assessment of Learning (AoL)

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. Assessment of Learning is more about measuring a child's cumulative progress towards objectives, often in the form of a grade or score. Assessment of Learning also helps the teacher to plan future work, to set new targets, and to provide feedback and information for end-of-year assessment.

Self-Assessment by Students and Teachers

Children are involved in self-assessment when they look at their own work in a reflective way, identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved, and then set personal learning targets for themselves. Self-assessment skills include effective questioning, reflection, problem solving, comparative analysis, and the ability to share thoughts in a variety of ways. Self-assessment can be used by children of all ability levels and in all areas of learning. In age-appropriate ways, it can be used throughout the primary school and across all subjects.

Whole class discussions, group situations or one-to-one conferencing are all platforms for self-assessment. These everyday activities place assessments at the very heart of teaching and learning.

It enables the child to take greater responsibility for his/her own learning. Pupils document self-assessment and reflection on his/her work samples or collections.

Teachers in turn, can also use self-assessment to evaluate how they deliver the curriculum content to the children and by reflecting on how a unit of work was delivered. This reflective practice, coupled with the AfL and AoL mentioned earlier, will help to inform teachers as to what was successful and if any adjustments may improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

We will use a variety of ways of involving pupils in assessing their own learning, these may include:

- 1. Questioning (literal, inferential, evaluative)*
- 2. Checklists*
- 3. Feedback-individual and/or group feedback.*
- 4. Dialogue and Discussion.*
- 5. Focused Correction of Work.*
- 6. Visual Aids in Juniors, Seniors and First Classes.*
- 7. Traffic Light System.*
- 8. Stickers*
- 9. Thumbs up , thumbs down.*
- 10. Smiley Face*
- 11. Two Stars and a Wish*
- 12. Self Correction*
- 13. Talk Partners / Buddies*

Early Intervention and Supplementary Teaching

There is an emphasis in our school on early intervention in Literacy and Numeracy from the Infant classes upwards. If a child begins to show signs of difficulty or a discrepancy becomes apparent between the chronological age of the child and their level of attainment in the Infant classes, the SEN teacher and the Class Teacher will meet to discuss with the parents/guardians, the possibility of further support and the possibility of testing in order to establish the nature of any difficulty. At this point the parents/guardians will be asked to sign a consent form allowing their child to receive additional support. We will follow the Continuum of Support as required.

By eliciting more precise information, it is possible to analyse the relative strengths and weaknesses of the child. Programmes can then be devised, based on the needs of the child, in order to give him/her specific help.

In the case where a child is selected for school support but the parents do not wish for the child to receive such support, a written letter from the parents will be sought outlining that while the school made them aware of the difficulty their child was experiencing and while supplementary teaching was made available, they have decided that they do not wish the child to avail of this support.

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*
- *Behaviour Checklists – NEPS*
- *Dyslexia Screening*
- *YARC*
- *Dolch Lists*
- *WIAT III (periodically)*
- *Termly literacy tests*
- *Termly Maths tests*

Standardised Tests • *The following tests are used:*

Micra T 1 - 6

Sigma T 1-6

[Levels 1 to 6] Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test

The SET/Class Teacher administers the Standardised Tests and records the results.

- *Each child's raw score, standard score, percentile rank and STEN score is recorded.*
- *The results will be analysed at whole school level and at individual class level and the information gathered from the tests will be used to inform teaching and learning.*
- *The results will help determine the priority needs when allocating SET hours in the school and the nature of the support provided.*
- *Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card. The STEN score is used to explain results to parents.*

Screening Priority will be given to pupils who are performing at or below the 90 Standard Score in English and Mathematics. The Continuum of Support as outlined in Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers [DES 2017] will be followed.

Continuum of Support

Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per Continuum of Support and Guidelines for Primary Schools. Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream School.

Classroom Support

School Support

School Support Plus

Diagnostic Testing

- *Diagnostic tests have an important role to play in identifying children with learning difficulties. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by Special Educational Needs A Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers, information Gathering and Assessment Section.*
- *Diagnostic tests will be administered by Special Education teachers and the results will be recorded and analysed.*
- *The results will be used in the drawing up of School Support Plans for pupils. The following tests are used: Dyslexia Screening. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. Other diagnostic tests may be purchased or rented and administered when deemed appropriate.*

Educational Psychological Assessment

When a child is prioritised for an educational psychologist assessment, a meeting will be held with the parents to discuss this procedure. The SET team in conjunction with the Principal will organise the assessment if with NEPs and not private. The assessment will inform the development of the Support Plan for the child. The psychological reports can only be accessed by personnel as outlined in page 95 of the NCCA Guidelines. These reports are stored securely in locked filing cabinets.

Recording and Storage of Assessment Information

Educational Psychological assessment reports are stored in the SET room in a locked cabinet. Standardized test results and at the end of year reports are available on Aladdin. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data.

Reporting

Information in relation to the assessment of children will be routinely reported.

Information will be communicated to parents through:-

1. *Parent / Teacher meetings.*
2. *End of Year Reports.*
3. *Standardised tests are reported through the end of year report routinely in from 1st to 6th classes.*

Success Criteria

We will know this policy has succeeded when:

- 1. A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of learning and teaching.*
- 2. Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for the different aspects.*
- 3. Transfer of information from teacher to teacher happens efficiently at the beginning and end of the school year.*
- 4. Each child has been presented with the opportunity of assessment from the spectrum of assessment tools mentioned above.*
- 5. Improved student outcomes when assessment data is analysed year on year*

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Principal has overall responsibility to ensure that all tasks and duties in this policy are delivered and completed in an effective way.

The SET will co-ordinate standardised testing in the school.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school if any more information is required.

Implementation Date

While most of the elements of this policy have been in operation within the school for many years, this amended Assessment Policy will formally apply from 16/02/26

Timetable for Review

This Policy is scheduled for review in 2 years

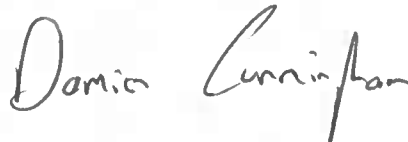
Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 16/02/26

Chairperson's signature 

Date: 8/6/26

Principal/Secretary BOM



Date: