St. Andrew's N.S.

Assessment Policy

This policy should be read in conjuction with all other school policies

Policy Ratified	July 2010 January 2014 June 2015 March 2017 March 2020

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This Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:

1. Data Protection Policy
2. SEN Policy
3. Maths and English Policies

Introductory Statement

This policy was initially drafted following whole staff collaboration in July 2010, reviewed in March 20202. Copies of this policy are available on the school website and in hard copy format from the school office.

In St. Andrew's we are guided by the principles of assessment laid down by the Department of Education and Skills and in the document "Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum" published by The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (N.C.C.A.). Please note references in this policy have been sourced from the above publication.

The Primary School Curriculum (1999 p.17) states:

Assessment is central to the process of teaching and learning. It is used to monitor learning processes and to ascertain achievement in each area of the curriculum. Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term learning needs of the child and plans further work accordingly.

The N.C.C.A. Guidelines (2007, p.7) define assessment as being *about "building a picture over time of a child's progress and/or achievement in learning across the Primary School Curriculum."*

Rationale

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. It plays a crucial role in informing teacher planning, School Self Evaluation (S.S.E.) and above all in enhancing both learning and teaching in St Andrew's. The purpose of all assessment is to extend, enrich and enhance the child's learning across all curriculum areas.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Assessment in this school aims to contribute to pupil learning and development in a positive, affirming and holistic manner. It thus informs teacher preparation but also as a means of communicating progress or difficulties to parents, pupils, colleagues and outside agencies (where appropriate).In St Andrew's we endeavour to ensure that our assessment procedures are free from bias, stereotyping and generalisation in respect of gender, class, race and disability. Self assessment also motivates pupils and encourages them to become more active agents in their own learning.

Aims of This Policy

By adopting and adapting this policy, the school aims to:
- Benefit teaching and learning
- Help monitor learning processes
- Generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- Monitor pupil progress and attainment

- Involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- Affirm the achievements of pupils
- Compile records of individual pupil progress and attainment
- Inform teachers' long and short term curricular planning thereby enabling them to modify their programmes of work and methodologies in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- Enabling teachers to self-assess their teaching methodologies and curricular content
- Inform the school's strategy for the prevention of learning difficulties
- Coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis
- Assist in School Self Evaluation (S.S.E.) and the development of School Improvement Plans (S.I.Ps)
- Facilitate communication between parents and teachers concerning pupils' development, progress and learning needs
- Encourages pupils to become more active agents in their own learning

What is Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. (N.C.C.A., p.7).

The N.C.C.A. presents assessment as having eight components. The assessment methods to the left are child lead. These become more teacher lead moving over to the right of the grid. (N.C.C.A., p. 13).
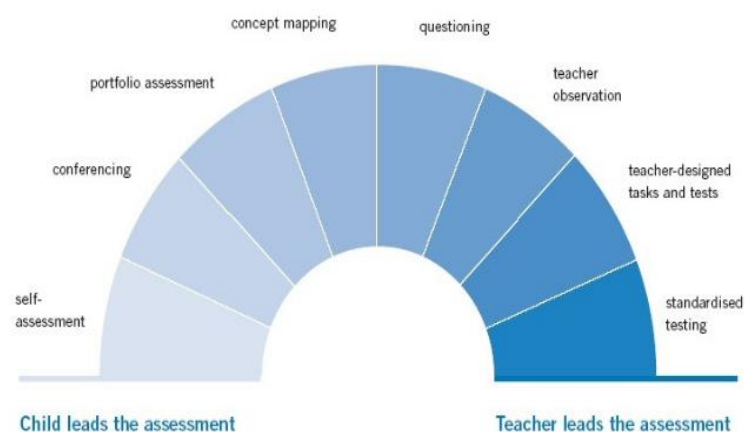
Assessment can be divided into two catagories

1. Assessment for Learning (AfL)
2. Assessment of Learning (AoL)

Assessment for Learning.

AfL is where the pupil plays an active part in his/her self-assessment. This assessment can take before, during and/or after a lesson. We in St Andrew's believe that by providing and facilitating feedback focused on the learning task in hand, the children will be enabled to celebrate their progress and achievements, pinpoint the challenges that a piece of work may pose thus helping both teacher and pupil to identify what the next learning step may be. The development of self-assessment skills will enhance meta-cognition (the awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes) which will empower the pupils to become life-long learners and effective communicators and problem solvers.

Self Assessment	This involves pupils assessing their own work reflectively thereby identifying their strengths and those requiring further attention.	E.g. Rubrics (p.21) Self Questioning (p.16) Self Evaluation sheets (p. 19) KWL grids (p.21) Thumbs up/down (p.85) Traffic Lights (p. 85) PMI Charts (p.85) Ladders (p. 85) WALT and WILF Charts **W**hat **A**re we **L**earning **T**o: teacher shares learning intention with the class **W**hat **I**'m **L**ooking **F**or: criteria of success

Other methods for AfL include: (please note that methods b-e are also used for AoL asessment.)

   a) Concept mapping (p.36-40)
   b) Questioning to Support AfL (p. 42-44)
   c) Teacher-designed tasks and tests (p.54-58)
   d) Teacher observation e.g. Event Sampling (p.p.46-51)
   e) Compilation of pupil "Work Samples", portfolios and projects
   f) Pupils engaging in peer and self assessment e.g. 3 Stars and a Wish

Assessment of Learning (AoL)

In contrast to AfL, Assessment of Learning focuses more on medium to long-term assessment. It generally involves assessing the pupil's learning at the end of a given period, (summative assessment) where the pupil receives a grade/ score. AoL enables the teacher to plan future work, set new targets and helps the teacher to provide feedback to parents (and more senior pupils) and information at the end of year. Assessment of Learning (AoL) is a more formal model which generally takes place at the end of a learning period, whether monthly, termly or annually. Such assessment methods may include:

-Teacher designed tests (p. 54-57)
-Teacher Observation (p. 46-51)
-Standardised Tests (p.60-65)

Standardised Tests

A key assessment tool used by schools involves the use of commercially produced Standardised Tests. Standardised tests are used mainly to measure children's attainment in literacy and numeracy and to compare their attainment levels with pupils in similar classes throughout the country. They also can be used to identify areas of learning where a child or group of children may need further support.

These tests are a snapshot of a child's attainment on a particular day. They may also be influenced by circumstances at home or in school on a given day. Test results should be viewed as part of a menu of assessment tools used to identify strengths and areas of difficulty encountered by individual pupils, groups of pupils and on a whole class basis. Results from standardised tests, along with teacher observation are used to:

1. Indicate whether further diagnostic assessment is needed.
2. Assist the school in the allocation of learning support/resource hours in the school to the individual pupil, class group or whole class during the subsequent school term or year.
3. Inform long and short term planning by teachers.
4. Inform Individual Education Profiles/Plans (I.E.Ps)/ for children attending Support Teaching

Standardised tests are generally used to assess pupil attainment in:

Literacy

The Drumcondra (Standardised) Reading and Spelling Attainment Tests are analysed by staff to identify strengths and specific areas of difficulty for an individual pupil, class or on a whole school basis. Here areas such as Vocabulary, Comprehension, Word Analysis and Spelling are evaluated. In Senior Infants we use the Middle Infants Screening Test (MIST) as a broad evaluation of pupils' attainment in Senior Infants only.

Drumcondra Reading	Completed in May from 1st to 6th class
Drumcondra Spelling Tests	Completed in March 1st to 6th class
Micra T	1st Class Term 1 (Nov)
MIST (Middle Infants Screening Test)	Completed in term two Senior Infants (term 5 primary cycle)
Jn Inf: Belfield Infant Assessment	Completed during the year if teaching resources permit

Numeracy

Likewise the Sigma T (Standardised) Attainment Tests are used to assess pupil proficiency in numeracy and are analysed by staff to identify specific strengths and areas of difficulty on an individual pupil, class and whole school basis in the areas of: Number, Algebra, Shape and Space, Measures and Data.

Sigma T	Completed in May from 1st to 6th class

Other

NRIT (Non Reading Intelligence Tests) Level 2	2nd class May (to be reviewed)

Please note that any tests completed in First class and Senior Infants must be completed in small groups.

Reporting and Scoring System for Standardised Tests

STen Scores are the uniform result format through which the school reports pupil attainment to the Department of Education and Skills. This is processed by the Deputy Principal on-line through our Aladdin data system. These scores, from 1-10, indicate the pupil's performance relative to that of her/his peer group throughout the country. For more information on this please refer to p.60-65.

These results of standardised tests are communicated to the parents/guardians of pupils in 1st to 6th Class in June also using the STen scores. Results of the Sigma Tests and Drumcondra Reading tests only are uploaded to the end of year reports.

Please see table below for a broad interpretation of test results for both literacy and numeracy. A detailed End of Year Report from the Class Teacher also informs parents of their child's progress from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Informal reporting on a pupil's progress may take place at any time throughout the school year or formally during parent/teacher meetings in term 3 of the school year.

STen Score Range	Descriptor
8-10	Well above average
7	High Average
5-6	Average
4	Low average
1-3	Well below average

Exemption from and Modifications to Standardised Testing

In certain cases, and for a small number of pupils, test administration may be modified if considered necessary by the principal teacher, in consultation with parents and other colleagues (DES Circular 0138/2006). A STen score of 1 is inputted into the School's data base (Aladdin) for pupils who are exempted from testing. The administration of a modified test is noted on the child's test booklet as is the location in which the test is administered. This information will and must also be recorded on Aladdin.

Pupils who are absent from school on the original test date may be accommodated during a subsequent group testing session. This will depend on resources of time and personnel available to the school to facilitate the administration of the test (s) in question.

Recording of Test Results

Assessment results are stored in cloud format and on the school's database (Aladdin). They are kept until the pupil reaches 21 years of age or for longer periods if pupils have an additional learning need.

Within the schools' database (Aladdin), a class tracking system is in operation to track each child's results throughout school from Senior Infants to Sixth Class. Results are also analysed, interpreted and recorded at a class and whole school level. They may also be used to inform School Self Evaluation (S.S.E.) and subsequent School Improvement Plans (S.I.P.). Please see school's Data Protection Policy for more details.

Transfer of Records to Post Primary and other Primary Schools

The school uses the N.C.C.A.s Education Passport (available on NCCA.ie) to communicate pupil attainment, strengths and needs directly to post primary schools. Copies of the 6th class yearly reports are also forwarded. The above takes place following the formal notification to St. Andrew's N.S. that the pupil(s) in question have been enrolled in the school concerned. More detailed reports and face-to-face meetings are held with the post primary schools to which our pupils and in particular those with additional needs are due to attend.

Children who Obtain Exceptionally High Scores on Standardised Tests

The school supports the educational principle of differentiation when teaching the primary School Curriculum. In St. Andrew's extra supports are provided for pupils who have additional learning and other needs as well as providing more challenging activities for those scoring from STen 9-10 rank in numeracy and literacy. When resources permit children in the latter group may either be withdrawn from class or targeted through station teaching within the classroom for more challenging activities appropriate to their ability/performance level.

Validity of Standardised tests

Class and Support teachers administer standardised tests to their own class, monitoring and observing pupils completing same*. To further ensure validity of scores, these tests are:

1. Administered strictly in accordance with the directions contained in the Test Administration Manual for the test concerned.
2. Scored by both support and class teachers who correct tests in a collaborative manner.
3. As professionals teachers shall never "teach to the test."

Under no circumstances may test manuals or booklets be removed from the school, shared with those other than the school's teaching staff or copied in hard copy format or electronically.

This is also a very valuable tool in assessment through teacher observation.

Diagnostic Tests

This form of testing is needed to evaluate pupil attainment particularly when a pupil does not present as having made adequate progress after receiving direct intervention from the class teacher over a period of time (usually a month or term). The Class and Support teachers consult with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) and written permission is sought

for diagnostic testing when necessary. (Please see school's Learning Support Policy). The school, with parental support and permission, may engage outside fellow professionals to assist in pupil assessment.

Success Criteria

Some practical indicators of the success of the policy include:

- Assessment Procedures running smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects of assessment.

- Effective transfer of information from Class/Support teacher to Class/Support teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of each school year.

- Informative and clear information being communicated to parents on their child's learning.

Roles and Responsibility

1. The Principal, Class and Support teachers and In–School Management (I.S.M.) post holder: responsible for implementing the policy.
2. The I.S.M. Co-ordinator: Purchases and distributes tests
3. The Deputy Principal: responsible for forwarding of school attainment statistics to the D.E.S.
4. The Class and Support teachers: administer evaluate/interpret and supervise tests.
5. Support Teachers: input pupil data into Aladdin at the end of each school year.
6. The 6th Class teacher and Support teacher: pass on the relevant information to colleagues in Post Primary Schools.
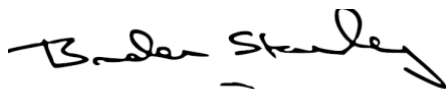
Implementation Date

These procedures reflect current practice in St Andrew's.

Timetable for Review

Principal and Deputy Principal, in consultation with colleagues, will initiate and co-ordinate this review.

Ratification & Communication

The school's Board of Management initially ratified this updated policy in March 2020.

Signed:

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 11th March 2020.