

Policy on Assessment

Introduction:

The policy was redrafted in May 2011 and was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2011.

Policy Rationale:

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 school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective.

Relationship to School Ethos:

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child, the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

Aims and Objectives:

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are;

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning
2. To create a procedure for monitoring achievement
3. To track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
4. To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses

Policy Content:

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils, including the exceptionally gifted so that adequate strategies are put in place early enough to facilitate remediation. These strategies may include pupil self assessment, pupil profiling, two way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programmes and individual education plans.

Assessment of Learning

Informal Assessments:

The most common form of assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher designed tests, projects and homework (informal assessment). These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers. Records of teacher-designed tests are kept by the individual teachers and communicated to parents at the Parent-teacher meeting and the school report issued at the end of the school year. Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing. The most common types of informal teacher designed testing in our school are math's tests, spelling tests and quizzes.

Assessment for Learning

Standardised Testing:

The school tests Infants to 3rd on Micra and 4th to 6th on Drumcondra (phasing out in the next 3 years), and all classes are tested on Sigma for mathematics. All classes from First class upwards are tested. The tests are usually administered in May or June by the class teacher. Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by the LSRT. The LSRT analyses the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Diagnostic Assessment:

The school policy on Psychological Assessment, lists all diagnostic tests used by the school. Such tests are administered by the Learning Support and Resource Teachers following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by **Circular 02/05** where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. Parents are provided with test results and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed. The Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening.

The diagnostic tests used in the school include;

- Neale Analysis
- Jackson – Get Reading Right
- Aston Index

Screening:

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in the school are;

- Belfield Infant Assessment Programme.
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST).
- Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT).
- Aston Index.
- PhAB phonological awareness.
- Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test.

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. The MIST and BIAP are administered on a class basis in Term 2 of each year, while the Aston Index is administered individually by the Learning Support Teacher when deemed appropriate. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per **Circular 24/03** and **Circular 02/05**.

Psychological Assessment:

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention, the class teacher/Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a psychological assessment for their child (see Psychological Assessment Policy). An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it 'Learning Support or Resource' hours.

Recording:

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the LS/R Room. This file records standardised test results and end of year reports. This file is accessible to all teacher as the child progresses through the system.

Success Criteria:

This policy is considered successful if;

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- The LSRT has clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Roles and Responsibilities:

Mainstream Special Education Teachers and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in motion staged interventions at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the LSRT. The Principal assumes a primary role at Stage 3 when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open.

Implementation:

This policy supersedes the policy drawn up in 2003 and is effective from September 2011.

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in February 2014 and communicated to parents thereafter.

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years time.

References:

DES Circular 02/05 – 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

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