St Francis National School

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Assessment Policy

Introduction:
St. Francis N.S. are committed to the ongoing development of pupils and to implementing effective assessment of and for learning. This policy has been formulated to provide a transparent and uniform approach to assessment throughout the school.

Rationale:
The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. Assessment activities used in this school will contribute to pupil learning and development by gathering relevant information to guide each pupil's further learning (assessment for learning) and by providing information on each pupil's achievement at a particular point in time (assessment of learning). We aim to enable all children to develop to their full potential through a child-centered curriculum. 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.

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 the use of a continuum of support leading to student support plans.

Overall 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 at each stage, which assist the long and short term planning of current teachers and future teachers

4. To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses

Relationship to School Ethos
The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective policy of assessment will identify the early interventions required to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

Definition of Assessment:
In line with the NCCA, our staff believe that assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is concerned with children's progress and achievement. It involves gathering information to understand how each child is progressing at school and using that information to further a child's learning. We concur with their definition of classroom assessment as "the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes." Assessment, therefore, involves much more than testing. It is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the child that include moment-by-moment conversations, observations and actions. (NCCA, *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools.* November 2007 p.7).

Aims of our Teacher Assessment Strategies:
- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To assist teachers' long and short term planning
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis.

Purposes of Assessment:
- To inform planning for all areas of the curriculum
- To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils including the exceptionally able
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes and their teaching methodologies in order to ensure that the particular needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- To compile records of individual pupils' progress and attainment
- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs

- To facilitate the active involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work

Range of Assessment Methods used Throughout the School:
Both *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning* are used by teachers to make professional judgements about pupil achievement/progress. Deciding what to assess will be based on the curriculum objectives in each curriculum area/subject and on what the teacher intends to help the children to learn. Pupil's progress is assessed on a continuous basis. The range of assessment methods that are used are outlined below *but are not limited to these.*

<u>Assessment *for* Learning Strategies:</u>
Assessment for Learning is a 'formative' assessment, aiming to support and advance students in their learning. At its heart, assessment for learning is a way of informing and involving the learners themselves in the process of assessment. The following methods of Assessment for Learning (AfI) can be chosen from:

Teacher-designed tasks and tests
Designed at the teacher's discretion.

Class assessments
Class assessments/test scores/samples of work are scanned and uploaded onto the school's assessment folder on the School Server termly.

Success and Improvement Strategy
Children will be provided with oral or written feedback on how to improve their work. This should include some positive feedback and on areas to improve/develop.

Sharing the learning intention/objective and devising success criteria
Telling children what they are going to learn... and agreeing the criteria for judging to what extent the outcomes have been achieved e.g.
- We are learning to (WALT)................... We will know when we've achieved this because/What I'm Looking For (WILF).............
- The learning objective(s) and the success criteria may be displayed on a chart/whiteboard/post it's etc.).
- Teacher/peer/self-evaluation in terms of these by identifying successes and improvement needs against the criteria.

Effective teacher questioning
Teachers use higher order questioning to provoke fruitful discussion. Strategies for turning recall questions into formative questions include –
- Giving a range of answers.
- A statement or opposing standpoint to debate

- Give the answer – and ask how it was arrived at.

Individual oral feedback
Enabling children to identify the next steps in their learning.

Quality marking by teacher
Pieces of work marked focusing on pointing out *success* and *improvement* rather than to mark every error in existence. On occasion 'test' marking will be undertaken whereby all aspects of the work will be marked e.g. a story where comments are made re. spelling, grammar, punctuation, handwriting and the overall quality of the work. Teachers will use a marking code when correcting longer pieces of writing. This will encourage child self correction (see the marking code in St. Francis NS English Plan)

Quality marking by children.
Children are gradually trained to identify their own successes and improvement needs, with control gradually handed over from the teacher to the child. In time it is hoped that children will incorporate the marking code when assessing their own/peers' work.

Oral responses of pupils

Teacher Observations

Pupil Self-Assessment
Self-assessment is the means by which pupils take responsibility for their own learning. However, we need to train pupils to self-assess. Teachers can select from the following strategies to aid self-assessment as appropriate;
- Children self-assess using traffic light code or by putting their copy/work into a designated box – need help, getting there,'; thumbs up/down; smiley faces etc.
- KWL
- Self-editing, drafting, redrafting
- Concept maps; mind maps; brainstorming
- Evaluation sheets
- Self-Evaluation Questions to facilitate reflection
- Pupil Questionnaires/Interviews
- Pupils Logs e.g. spelling log, reading log etc.
- Reflection; Representation; Reporting. Children think about what they have been learning. They then represent what they have learned (e.g. by KWL, showing a response that contains for example a drawing, concept map, brainstorm, questions, map, paragraph etc.) Children then report on their learning – to the teacher; class; group; parent; partner etc.

Teacher conferencing with pupil

Completed assignments by pupils – projects, copybooks, work samples, homework, etc.

Parental, pupil feedback or observation

Standardised tests

Diagnostic tests

Assessment by psychologist

Assessment *of* Learning:
Assessment *for* Learning is 'formative', while Assessment *of* Learning is 'summative', i.e. Its main purpose is to grade and certify students' achievement and inform future planning and learning.

Standardised Testing: (Refer to Circular 26/19)
The purpose of the standardised tests is to allow teachers to make placement and progress decisions based on assessment results and to develop appropriate interventions for certain children.

The school uses the New Drumcondra Reading and New Drumcondra Maths and NNRIT tests. First Class Drumcondra Reading and Maths tests are screening tests. All classes from Second class upwards are tested using the Drumcondra Reading and Maths test (these tests are usually administered in May by the class or SET teacher). The NNRIT is carried out with 1st, 3rd and 5th Classes (generally in October each year by the class or SET teacher).

Standardised tests are administered on a class basis by the class teacher. In the event that a pupil is absent on the day of the test the SET teacher or class teacher, if suitable, will administer the test at a later date. Pupils may be excluded from the tests if in the view of the principal they have any learning or physical disability which would prevent them from taking the test or newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting the test would be inappropriate.

Each child's raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN and Reading age is recorded. The percentile rank and Sten score is recorded on the tracking system. The SET team analyses the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.
Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card.

The results will determine the allocation of Special Education Teaching in the school and the nature of the support provided (in-class and/or withdrawal). See Special Education Policy.

If diagnostic testing is considered necessary, a meeting will be organised with Parents, Class teacher and/or SET teacher.

Screening: *(Refer to Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools and Circular 13/17 and Circular 07/19)*

First step in identifying pupils who may need Learning Support in Literacy or Numeracy is highlighted by teacher observation and through teacher designed tests. The particular screening measures that are administered will depend on the age and stage of development of the pupils.

Infant Classes:
Teacher designed tests are administered in infant classes:
Literacy
- Jolly Phonics sound recognition, tricky word recognition, dictation, nonsense words, letter formation, writing words for pictures, samples of handwriting are analysed.
- Senior Infant children self-assess their own work and select a piece of their writing per term that is "their best/favourite work".
- Senior Infant children to complete 'Writing Progression Portfolio" (one page, box per term).

Numeracy
Term tests based on the Maths Programme.

All Classes:
Teacher designed tests and standardised test are administered in these classes:
Literacy
- Teacher designed tests for example spelling/dictation tests, comprehension tests
- Standardised tests: Drumcondra tests
- Children can self-assess their own work and select a piece of their writing per term that is "their best/favourite work".
- Sample of children's work/Children to complete 'Writing Progression Portfolio" (one page, box per term).

Numeracy
- Teacher designed tests: tables test, mental maths etc
- Topic/Term tests
- Standardised tests: Drumcondra Maths Test

The Principal, in conjunction with all staff, analyses the results of these tests. The results of end of year testing are included in end of year

reports. The SET team will then include the children in the Special Education timetable and parents will be informed.

Diagnostic Assessment:
Some diagnostic tests are used by the school to determine the needs of individuals. Such tests are administered by the Special Education Teachers (SET Team) following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the Special Education Needs, A Continuum of Support 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 following are some of formal diagnostic tests are used in school to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties:
- NNRIT
- Letter Identification Assessment
- BAS Reading Assessment
- Duncan Reading Assessment
- Vocabulary Writing Assessment
- Hearing and Recording Sounds Assessment
- Nonsense words Assessment
- Primary School Assessment Kit (DES 2007)
- The British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS111)
- PEP-3 assessment tool for special classes
- WRAT-5 measuring basic academic skills

Class teacher, SET Team, Principal and Parents are involved in selecting children for diagnostic assessment.

Parental permission for the carrying out of these assessments has previously been granted at the time of the pupil's enrolment in the school.

The SET teacher administers the diagnostic tests and interprets the results.

If the diagnostic assessment indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial this will be arranged. In consultation with the classroom teacher, a learning programme will be drawn up.

Appropriate different learning interventions are initiated to ensure that the results of the assessments inform subsequent learning plans. This is evident in SEN teacher's plans and class teacher plans e.g. differentiation and on the continuum of support

Parents are consulted about diagnostic testing at a meeting organised by the class teacher and/or SET teacher/coordinator. At this meeting concerns are discussed and recommendations for further testing are made. Parents' permission is sought and the school request written permission.

Written permission is always sought if an outside agency is involved. For children under the age of 6 a referral may be made through the Assessment of Needs process for further assessment in conjunction with parents.

SEN coordinator schedules a SEN meeting with parents (and relevant agencies) following testing to share information about diagnostic results

If it is felt necessary to consult a psychologist (NEPS or other) about diagnostic test results the Principal will organise a consultation meeting.

Psychological/ OT/ Speech & Language/Other Assessment
Children may be identified for assessment/observation at any time during the academic year. The class teacher, SET teacher and/or Principal meet parents & a consent form is signed by the parents if the child is targeted for psychological assessment.
Children who present with possible SLT/OT needs will be identified by teachers to the SET teachers/Principal. The Principal, SET teacher and/or the class teacher will advise parents re: getting a medical referral from their G.P. or other services.
The results of assessments will guide the drafting of a support plan for the pupil if appropriate. It determines the level of intervention required.
The Principal will ensure that details of relevant reports are transferred with all 6th class pupils on their transfer to Second Level Education.

Recording Results of Assessment:
Each class teacher has a hard copy assessment folder. This folder contains test and assessment results, samples of pupils' work and pupil's self-evaluation. In addition, each class has an assessment folder on the school server containing class records of attainment (as listed above).

All data is sensitive to each child and each teacher is responsible for the safe storage of their assessment folder.

Hard copies of the pupil's professional reports are stored in a locked filing cabinet in an SET room and/or in the special classroom. Pupil support files are also located here. These can also be found on Databiz with relevant teachers having access to this material.

Standardised test results will be given to the relevant second level school on transfer from Primary to Second Level as per the pupil passport. End

of year assessment results will determine who will receive Special Education teaching for the following year. The standardised test results will be given to the BOM to review overall school standards in Literacy / Numeracy. (No individual results will be identifiable)

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 Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Roles and Responsibilities:
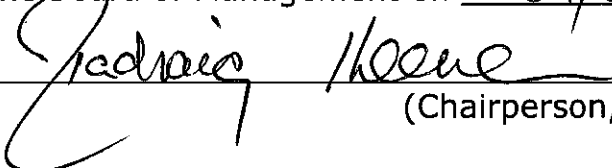All members of staff, Parents and BoM.

Timeframe for Review:
This policy will be reviewed every three years, or as required to meet the developing needs of the school.

Next review:
June 2025

Assessment Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on ___ 21/6/2022 ___

<div align="right">(Date)</div>

Signed: ___ Nadhaic Keane ___

<div align="right">(Chairperson, Board of Management)</div>