

Wicklow Educate Together N.S.

Assessment Policy

Introduction and Rationale

The Introduction to the Primary School Curriculum (1999) identifies assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and emphasises the importance of assessing the process of learning as well as the product. The curriculum includes general guidelines on assessment for each subject and suggests a range of assessment tools that can be used for specific purposes. The school recognises its obligations under Article 22 of the Education Act “to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents”.

In planning a whole school assessment plan the spiral approach to assessment and the curriculum was taken into account.

The school has identified the following advantages associated with meaningful assessment in the primary school:

- Facilitates improved pupil learning.
- Creates a procedure for monitoring achievement.
- Tracks learning processes which assist long and short term planning.
- Identifies areas of difficulty and indicates a course of action to overcome these.
- Highlights pupil needs which will inform future targets and learning outcomes.
- Helps to inform individual teacher plans as well as whole school planning.

If assessment is to be meaningful, it must be developed alongside learning activities so that it can reflect how pupils are learning, what pupils are learning and where the learning is taking them. Assessment is based on clearly defined skills or curricular activities.

Assessment Approaches in Wicklow Educate Together

- **Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment)**

Assessment of learning focuses more on medium and long term assessment. 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. The emphasis in assessment of learning is on measuring a child’s cumulative progress towards curriculum objectives,

Examples:

- Teacher designed tests and tasks
- Weekly tests i.e., spellings and table checklists
- Standardised Tests
- Diagnostic Tests

- **Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment)**

Assessment for learning is an on-going process of recognising and responding to the child's learning in order to enhance it. This involves engaging children in their own learning through questioning, and discussion and involving children in peer and self-assessment. The child's response to rich questions and his/her dialogue with the teacher and peers provide evidence of the child's learning which can be used to direct future learning. The quality of a child's response to a question can, for example, suggest further questions which lead the child to a greater understanding of an idea or concept. Central to the idea of the assessment for learning is the role of feedback in promoting children's awareness of and participation in their own learning. Feedback that is focused on the learning or task in hand, that indicates next steps and that points to achievement and challenges has been shown to be integral to children's classroom progress and confidence in learning.

Examples:

- Teacher Observations
- Teacher Questioning (lower and higher order)
- Discussion and Teacher / Pupil conferencing
- Work Samples
- Teacher designed tests and tasks
- Portfolios
- Self-assessment
- KWL and Mind Maps
- Peer Assessment
- Standardised Test
- Diagnostic Test

- **Self-Assessment:**

Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in their learning by self-evaluating and setting future targets. Self-assessment involves metacognition, the process of being aware of and reflecting on one's own learning and learning style. A variety of tools are used across the school

- Scoring rubrics
- Two stars and a wish
- Even better if
- Traffic lights
- Thumbs up

- **Peer Assessment:**

Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to evaluate and assess each other's work. This is done across curricular subjects and can consist of:

- Marking work
- Questioning
- Giving constructive feedback, even 2 stars and a wish
- Co-operative learning

- Setting targets
- Shared reading activities

- **Teacher Assessment:**

Teacher assessment is carried out on a daily basis. Most assessment is done informally. The following strategies are used:

- Observations
- Discussions
- Teacher devised tests in literacy and numeracy
- Questioning
- Developmental checklists
- Portfolios
- Projects work
- Guided reading

- **Diagnostic and Screening Assessment:**

The use of standardised tests in literacy and numeracy enables the detailed diagnosis of specific areas of pupils' learning by identifying both how well students are doing in some curricular areas and where they require more support. These tests can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of new curricula, teaching methodologies and resources. In doing so, the results from such tests should inform teachers' planning to ensure areas of the curricula, in need of development, are addressed.

Diagnostic and Screening Assessment:

The following diagnostic assessments and screening processes are in use / in the process of being implemented within the school. The results of these assessments will be kept on file and will become part of the pupil's school record.

- The BIAP is administered to all pupils in junior infants in the second term.
- The MIST test will be administered in the second term of Senior Infants.
- Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, Drumcondra Spelling Test and Sigma T are administered in the third term for 1st - 6th class. Results from these tests will help highlight pupils needing supplementary teaching.
- Non-Reading Intelligence Test is used to assess background experience and ability. This is conducted with children in 2nd class. Results from these tests will help to highlight pupils needing supplementary teaching.
- EAL testing: Children with English as an additional language are tested using the Primary Assessment Kit.

Undiagnosed Learning Difficulties

- A series of screening tools such as the Jackson Phonics / Neale Analysis will be administered to pupils with undiagnosed learning difficulties who are identified as being in need of support teaching.
- Other screening tests such as the DCD questionnaire, TEST2R and the DST will also be administered in the case of undiagnosed learning difficulties. The learning support department will maintain and add to those tests.

Administration of Screening Tests

- The support department are responsible for purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing.
- The class teacher administers the standardised tests in co-ordination with the Support Teacher. The support teacher co-ordinates and administers the BIAP to junior infants and the MIST in consultation with the class teachers.
- In the case of children with specific needs, the tests may be carried out on a one- to-one basis or within a small group.
- Pupils who are not taking a test with their classmates complete the test in the SEN room under the supervision of a support teacher.
- The raw score, standard score, percentile rank, and STEN scores are recorded on Aladdin. There is a uniform approach across all classes
- Information gathered from tests inform teaching and learning by showing pupils' areas of weakness and areas of strength in relation to national norms.
- Results of the standardised tests from 1st-6th are communicated to parents at the end of the year. The Standard Score is the score used to communicate results. An explanatory note is sent to parents.
- The results of these tests are used to inform the support team of those who require further diagnostic testing. Furthermore, they have bearing on the allocation of support in the school.

Administration of Diagnostic Assessment:

Formal diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties.

- The class teacher and support staff are involved in selecting pupils for diagnostic assessment
- Parents are informed and consulted prior to the carrying out of a diagnostic assessment.
- The support team administers the diagnostic tests
- The class teacher and Support Teacher interpret the results
- If it is felt necessary to consult a psychologist (NEPS or other) about diagnostic test results, the support co-ordinator, support teacher, principal and/or parents arrange for such consultation

Psychological Assessment:

- The support teacher and class teacher liaise with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required.
- The support co-ordinator and support teacher are responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from specialists (e.g. Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, Audiologist, etc...) or directing parents to the relevant agency who can provide that support.
- The assessment plays an important role in drafting support plans for pupil as it identifies areas of weakness and strength as well as providing recommendations for learning
- Psychological reports are stored in the individual pupil's file in the coded filing room and their receipt logged on Aladdin.

Timetable of Assessment:

- **Junior Infants:**
Term 2 – BIAP. The results of the BIAP are compiled into a spreadsheet and form part of assessment folders. A copy of the spreadsheet is also kept in the support room files.
- **Senior Infants:**
Term 2 – MIST. The results of
- **1st Class – 6th Class:**
Term 3 – Sigma T, Drumcondra Reading and Drumcondra spelling.
- **2nd Class**
NRIT
- **6th Class:** NCCA Education Passport will be used to transfer pupil information to the relevant post-primary school at the end of 6th class, following confirmation of enrolment. (See www.ncca.ie/transfer). Parental consent is sought for this.

Reading Records

- A whole school record is kept of children's reading level and this is used to pick novels for guided reading / Oxford Reading Tree Homework.

Record Keeping:

Under the Education Act (1998), parents have a right to be informed of their child's progress. Schools will at times need to share assessment information with a range of people including parents, teachers in other schools and other professionals associated with the education of the child. It is important, therefore, that assessment information is readily communicable to such a varied audience.

Reporting:

Schools are obliged, under Part 7 of DES Circular 0056/2011: 'Reporting and Using the Results of Assessments to Improve Pupil Learning', to report information from standardised tests to

parents, the school Board of Management, the Department of Education and Skills and to another school if a pupil moves there.

Reporting to Parents:

Parents are informed of their children’s progress in the following ways:

- **Formal:**
 - Annual Parent-Teacher meetings
 - Written end of year report
 - Other meetings may be arranged throughout the year, should the need arise

- **Informal:**
 - Notes/letters home
 - Informal chats in morning and at collection time
 - Project work, class work sent home to show progress

This policy is read in conjunction with all other WETNS policies and procedures

Review:

This policy is a working document and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

This policy was ratified by: Wicklow Educate Together Board of Management on **28 February 2019**

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____