

**SCOIL EOIN BAISDE
CAILÍNÍ NAOIDH**

**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
INFANT GIRLS SCHOOL**

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introductory Statement

This Assessment Policy has been reviewed in the light of the NCCA publication, *Assessment in the Primary School: Guidelines for Schools (2007)* and the requirements of the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2011)*.

Assessment is informally carried out on an ongoing basis in Belgrove Infant Girls' School. This aids the teachers/learning support teacher and parents in compiling programmes suitable for the educational development of each child. It is used as a tool to enable the children to know how to progress their own learning in the classroom and beyond.

Rationale

This policy is intended to formalise the school's approach to assessment and record-keeping in order to clarify and standardise the policy, so that teachers and parents know what standard is expected. There are two principal approaches in Belgrove Infant Girls' School, in accordance with the *Guidelines for Assessment* document (NCCA, 2007) – Summative (*Assessment of Learning*) and Formative (*Assessment for Learning*).

Assessment of Learning

Assessment of Learning serves two purposes : It (a) aids teachers and parents to monitor children's progress from year to year (summative assessment) and (b) identifies any learning problems, so that early intervention can take place where necessary (diagnostic).

Assessment for Learning

The use of *Assessment for Learning* is a tool to enable children to monitor and improve their own learning and is an integral part of the day-to-day work in each classroom (formative).

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

The spirit of this school is to enhance the total spiritual, physical, emotional and educational development of each individual child. To this end, the teacher needs to assess the progress of the pupils and to identify in what way the school can help each child fulfil her potential. The children are enabled to identify and record their own progress, their strengths and weaknesses, through the use of formative assessment.

Aims

The aims of assessment are five-fold:

1. To provide information on the progress of pupils for parents and teachers, thus assisting in the compilation of suitable programmes for pupils.
2. To monitor and improve the quality of the whole child's progress, her creative, physical and personal skills, social development and knowledge.
3. To inform the school in its self-evaluation and school improvement plan.
4. To enable the child to see herself as a 'learner', rather than simply a 'pupil'.
5. To enable the child to identify strategies which enhance her learning and her self-esteem.

Methodology

Informal assessment is carried out every day by each teacher and more formal testing methods are also used. These include:

1. Questioning and observation, during class work.
2. Teachers of First Class may assess their pupils more formally with the administration of weekly spelling/tables test.
3. Allocation and assessment of homework gives teachers, pupils and parents a good indication of progress.
4. Children's progress is evaluated at the end of each term. Information on the child's progress will be given to parents at formal Parent/Teacher meetings and in the annual report. However, in the case of a child who is failing to meet criteria, parents will be contacted and informed immediately by the teacher, in order to set in place a programme of help for the child. Parents are welcome to enquire about the progress of their child and teachers will be happy to discuss this at a mutually convenient time.
5. The subject areas to be summatively assessed are English and Maths.

6. Progress assessment in English and Maths would usually take the form of worksheets based on work already covered in class. The teacher may design her own worksheets or extract them from a suitable manual.
7. Progress assessment takes place in all classes from Junior Infants.
8. Formative assessment may take the form of methods such as ‘Thumbs’, ‘Traffic Lights’, ‘Talk Buddies’, ‘Two Stars and One Wish’, portfolios, KWL-sheets, evaluation-sheets, rubrics, learning-logs and mind-maps, as each teacher decides. These methods are discussed outlined in more detail in the ‘Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum’ Guidelines (NCCA, 2007).
9. Formal tests currently in use are:
 - Middle Infant Screening Test – Senior Infants
 - Sigma-T and Micra-T – First Class.
 - Quest- First Class

Assessment Timetable

Junior Infants

The Learning Support teacher will assess the progress of the Junior Infant pupils in their third term in school and report any concerns to the class teacher. The class teacher will make these concerns known to the child’s parents.

Senior Infants

The Learning Support teacher, along with the class teacher, will carry out a structured testing of the Senior Infant classes, in order to assess which children are in need of support in English. This will usually involve the use of a commercially produced test, such as the Middle Infant Screening Test. With the guidance of the class teacher, a programme will be designed to aid the identified children to reach a higher standard.

First Class

First Class will be assessed using the Quest Test at the beginning of the year. This test is carried out for the purpose of early intervention. The “cut-off points” are listed in the relevant manuals and teachers will use these and their own observation of each child to decide if a child requires additional help or further screening.

Standardised tests in English and Maths are administered to the First Classes in late May and the Sten scores (class based) results are communicated in writing to parents at the end of the school year.

Information and results will be noted and coded or kept securely by the teacher. Under the Freedom of Information Act, parents can access their own child's progress records. Others who also have access are: DES Inspectors, School Principal, Learning Support Teacher and the Resource Teacher as necessary.

With effect from 1 June 2012 legislative arrangements have been made to provide for sharing information on progress, including the results of standardised tests, where students transfer from one school to another. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (Section 28) and the (Prescribed Bodies) Regulations 2005 allow schools to share relevant information concerning a child transferring between recognised schools without breaching data protection law. From the date of this review, this information is defined as First Class end-of-year reports and results of standardised tests, where applicable. Should the pupil transfer to another school this information will be made available to that school following the pupil's enrolment there once a formal request is received in writing.

Success Criteria

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- Does the child display an interest in her own learning and progress?
- Does she have an increased sense of self-esteem in relation to her work?
- Is she aware of her personal strengths and weaknesses?
- Is she committed to learning and aware of the process of how to learn?

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- Do the test results give an accurate evaluation of the child?
- Do the test results identify the area(s) of difficulty for the child?
- Can the teacher identify and work on improving the child's understanding of these areas?
- Can these difficulties be communicated effectively to the child's parents, so that parents, teacher and child can overcome these difficulties to the best of their ability?

Roles and Responsibility

- Overall responsibility rests with the School Principal.
- The class teacher is responsible for the teaching, assessment and, if necessary, remediation of the children in her care.
- The learning support teacher assesses the progress of the Junior Infant pupils in the last term
- If a pupil is absent on the day of testing the learning support teacher will administer the test at a later date.

Timeframe for Implementation

- Informal assessment/observation is already under way.
- Formal end of term assessment commences December 2003 for all classes.
- The use of Formative Assessment in the classroom commences in 2012.

Timeframe for Review

Review of this policy as necessary.

Responsibility for Review

The Principal in consultation with staff and parents.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 2nd of October 2012 and will be posted on the school website and will be available in the office on request.

Signed: *PAUL NOLAN*
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 2 October 2012