

Assessment & Recording Policy Headford Primary School

Introduction

This policy was originally drafted following the amalgamation of Headford Girls and Boys Schools to form the new school Headford Primary School in September 2024. The policy was ratified by the Single School Manager overseeing the amalgamation of the two schools .

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 whole 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 and the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that relative success, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aims / objectives of the policy are to:

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

Principles

1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment must be to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.
3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organization, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
5. We recognize the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.
6. In addition to normal assessment, opportunities are taken to record significant points in a child's development, such as:
 - a moment of 'breakthrough' in understanding
 - surprises and unusual reactions
 - interesting examples of strategies for mental calculation
 - difficulties encountered and possible reasons for them.
7. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.

8. Assessment of behaviour and performance gradually builds up into a profile for each pupil over his school career. This is a working document for the use of teaching staff only. It is not an official school record. The profiles are stored in the Principal's office and are available to teachers on request.
9. Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and should not be administratively burdensome.

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 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. See also SEN Policy.

Formal Assessment

Assessments are carried out in all classes in September of each year and are used to inform teaching and learning throughout the school. Tests used usually include teacher designed tests and tasks. Further diagnostic tests are carried out throughout the year by the Special Education Teacher (SET) on specific children as need arises. The NRIT is carried out on all pupils in 1st, 3rd and 5th classes in Term 1. The MIST is carried out on all senior infant pupils in Term 2. The Drumcondra Reading, Maths and Spelling Tests are administered in May of each year to all children except those in infant classes or pupils who are exempt from testing, and, after correction results are shared with parents/guardians via end of year reports.

Informal Assessment

Homework and class work are marked and comments are made as appropriate. Marks and especially grades are not usually given. Work is ticked to indicate that the teacher has looked at it and a written comment to indicate sources of error, good points etc. will normally be made.

1. Class work

Obviously, 'informal' assessment is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc.

2. Homework

Homework is checked both formally and informally in a routine way.

Completion of Project work

The completed project or notes on a topic is collected and marked. The marking recognizes excellence and indicates the areas that need improvement.

Primary to Secondary

A meeting via phone call is held each year with key staff from the local second-level schools to discuss pupils' performance in their assessment tests and to report on individual pupils. This meeting is attended by the sixth class teachers and the principal.

For pupils leaving the school, up to date records are passed on to the principal by the class teacher for forwarding to the new school.

Standardised Testing

The school administers Drumcondra Reading, Drumcondra Maths and the Drumcondra Spelling Tests. All classes from First class upwards are tested. The tests are usually administered towards the middle of the May by the class teacher. Standard and Percentile Rankings scores are recorded on Aladdin by each individual teacher. Class teachers keep a printed record of the class scores from standardised tests in ascending order in their

assessment folders. The SET analyse the results in August for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Pupils in Senior Infants are assessed using the MIST test. Following DES guidelines all standardized test scores will be orally given to parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher meetings and a STEN will be written in the end of year reports.

Diagnostic Assessment

The school policy on Psychological Assessments lists all diagnostic tests used by the school. Such tests are administered by the SET 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 advised of the outcome 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
- Aston Index
- P.S. Jackson Tests
- Miscue Analysis
- Schonell Spelling
- Schonell Single Word Reading Test

Screening

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in our school are –

- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- New Non Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)
- WIAT 3
- PSAK-Primary School Assessment Kit

These tests are administered individually or on a whole class basis. The MIST is administered on a whole class basis in Term 2 of each year, while the Neale Analysis is administered individually by the SET when deemed appropriate. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per circulars 24/03 and 02/05. Children undertaking the "Follow-On" programme after MIST testing are retested by the SEN teacher upon completion of the programme.

Psychological Assessment

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention the class teacher / Principal will contact the parents for permission to discuss the possibility of accessing a Psychological Assessment through NEPS for their child . An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it Additional Learning Support hours or a School Support Plan. 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 / end of year report.

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 Maths tests, spelling tests and quizzes.

Recording

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the administration office. Hard copies of tests are usually stored in this file while results are recorded digitally on Aladdin. Information is passed on from teacher to teacher on a need to know basis and access on Aladdin can be granted by the Principal to teachers other than the class teacher if required. Children receiving extra support in school have a separate file which contains their School Support File. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).

Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if –

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in staged approach
- Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Roles and Responsibilities

Special Education teachers and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education team. 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 will be fully implemented by October 2024.

Review Timetable

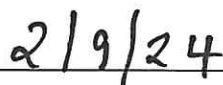
This policy will be reviewed in 2 years' time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Single School Manager and communicated to parents/guardians f thereafter



Rosaleen Crowe O'Neill
(Single School Manager)



Date