

**Assessment Policy**

**2018+**

**Board of Management Scoil Bhríde Nurney**

**2018+**



**Scoil Bhríde**

**Assessment Policy**

**Introductory Statement**

This policy was initially drafted following whole staff collaboration in December 2018. Copies of this policy are available on the school website and in hard copy format from the school office.

In Scoil Bhríde Nurney we are guided by the principles of assessment laid down by the Department of Education and Skills and in the document “Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum” published by The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (N.C.C.A.). Please note references in this policy have been sourced from the above publication.

The Primary School Curriculum (1999 p.17) states:

Assessment is central to the process of teaching and learning. It is used to monitor learning processes and to ascertain achievement in each area of the curriculum. Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term learning needs of the child and plans further work accordingly.

The N.C.C.A. Guidelines (2007, p.7) define assessment as being about “building a picture over time of a child’s progress and/or achievement in learning across the Primary School Curriculum.”

**Rationale**

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child’s progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. It plays a crucial role in informing teacher planning, School Self Evaluation (S.S.E.) and above all in enhancing both learning and teaching in Scoil Bhríde Nurney. The purpose of all assessment is to extend, enrich and enhance the child’s learning across all curriculum areas.

**Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Assessment in this school aims to contribute to pupil learning and development in a positive, affirming and holistic manner. It thus informs teacher preparation but also acts as a means of communicating progress or difficulties to parents, pupils, colleagues and outside agencies (where appropriate). In Scoil Bhríde Nurney we endeavour to ensure that our assessment procedures are free from bias, stereotyping and generalisation in respect of gender, class, race and disability. Self-assessment also motivates pupils and encourages them to become more active agents in their own learning

**Aims of This Policy**

By adopting and adapting this policy, the school aims to:

* Benefit teaching and learning
* Help monitor learning processes
* Generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
* Monitor pupil progress and attainment
* Involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
* Affirm the achievements of pupils
* Compile records of individual pupil progress and attainment
* Inform teachers’ long and short-term curricular planning thereby enabling them to modify their programmes of work and methodologies in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
* Enable teachers to self-assess their teaching methodologies and curricular content
* Inform the school’s strategy for the prevention of learning difficulties (as per Scoil Bhríde’s SEN Policy regarding early intervention)
* Coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis
* Assist in School Self Evaluation (S.S.E.) and the development of School Improvement Plans (S.I.Ps)
* Facilitate communication between parents and teachers concerning pupils’ development, progress and learning needs
* Encourage pupils to become more active agents in their own learning

**What is Assessment?**

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. (N.C.C.A., p.7). The N.C.C.A. presents assessment as having eight components. The assessment methods to the left are child lead. These become more teacher lead moving over to the right of the grid. (N.C.C.A., p. 13).



**Assessment can be divided into two categories**

1. Assessment for Learning (AfL)

2. Assessment of Learning (AoL)

**Assessment for Learning.**

AfL is where the pupil plays an active part in his/her self-assessment. This assessment can take before, during and/or after a lesson. We in Scoil Bhríde Nurney believe that by providing and facilitating feedback focused on the learning task in hand, the children will be enabled to celebrate their progress and achievements, pinpoint the challenges that a piece of work may pose thus helping both teacher and pupil to identify what the next learning step may be. The development of self-assessment skills will enhance metacognition (the awareness and understanding of one’s own thought processes) which will empower the pupils to become life-long learners and effective communicators and problem solvers.

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| Self-Assessment | This involves pupils assessing their own work reflectively thereby identifying their strengths and those requiring further attention. | E.g. Rubrics (p.21)Self-Questioning (p.16)Self Evaluation sheets (p. 19)KWL grids (p.21)Thumbs up/down (p.85)Traffic Lights (p. 85)PMI Charts (p.85)Ladders (p. 85)WALT and WILF Charts **W**hat **A**re we **L**earning **T**o: teacher shares learning intention with the class**W**hat **I**'m **L**ooking **F**or: criteria of success |
| Other methods for AfL include: (please note that methods b-e are also used for AoL asessment.)a) Concept mapping (p.36-40)b) Questioning to Support AfL (p. 42-44)c) Teacher-designed tasks and tests (p.54-58)d) Teacher observation e.g. Event Sampling (p.p.46-51)e) Compilation of pupil “Work Samples”, portfolios and projectsf) Pupils engaging in peer and self-assessment e.g. 3 Stars and a Wish |

*\* All page references come from “Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools)*

**Assessment of Learning (AoL)**

In contrast to AfL, Assessment of Learning focuses more on medium to long-term assessment. It generally involves assessing the pupil’s learning at the end of a given period, (summative assessment) where the pupil receives a grade/ score. AoL enables the teacher to plan future work, set new targets and helps the teacher to provide feedback to parents (and more senior pupils) and information at the end of year. Assessment of Learning (AoL) is a more formal model which generally takes place at the end of a learning period, whether monthly, termly or annually. Such assessment methods may include:

-Teacher designed tests (p. 54-57)

-Teacher Observation (p. 46-51)

-Standardised Tests (p.60-65)

*\* All page references come from “Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools)*

**Standardised Tests**

A key assessment tool used by schools involves the use of commercially produced Standardised Tests. Standardised tests are used mainly to measure children’s attainment in literacy and numeracy and to compare their attainment levels with pupils in similar classes throughout the country. They also can be used to identify areas of learning where a child or group of children may need further support.

**These tests are a snapshot of a child’s attainment on a particular day (set by the school principal). They may also be Influenced by circumstances at home or in school on a given day.**

Test results should be viewed as part of a menu of assessment tools used to identify strengths and areas of difficulty encountered by individual pupils, groups of pupils and on a whole class basis. Results from standardised tests, along with teacher observation are used to:

1. Indicate whether further diagnostic assessment is needed
2. Assist the school in the allocation of support teaching in the school to the individual pupil, class group or whole class during the subsequent school term or year
3. Inform long and short-term planning by teachers
4. Inform Individual Education Profiles/Plans (I.E.Ps)/ for children attending Support Teaching

Standardised tests are generally used to assess pupil attainment in:

**Literacy**

The MICRA-T (Standardised) Reading and the Drumcondra Spelling Attainment Tests are analysed by staff to identify strengths and specific areas of difficulty for an individual pupil, class or on a whole school basis. Here areas such as Vocabulary, Comprehension, Word Analysis and Spelling are evaluated. In Senior Infants we use the Middle Infants Screening Test (MIST) as a broad evaluation of pupils’ attainment *(following 5 school terms junior infants to senior infants)*. The Belfield infant assessment profile is used at the discretion of the junior infant teacher to evaluate designated junior infant pupil attainment.

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| Drumcondra Spelling Tests(\* Drumcondra Irish Test) | Completed in Final Term from 1st to 6th class (April – May)\*2nd,4th, 6th class (April – May) |
| MICRA-T | Completed in Final term from 1st to 6th class (April – May) |
| MIST (Middle Infants Screening Test) | Completed in term two Senior Infants (term 5 primary cycle) |
| Belfield Infant Assessment Profile | Completed during the Final Term (select pupils only) |

**Numeracy**

Likewise, the Sigma T (Standardised) Attainment Tests are used to assess pupil proficiency in numeracy and are analysed by staff to identify specific strengths and areas of difficulty on an individual pupil, class and whole school basis in the areas of: Number, Algebra, Shape and Space, Measures and Data.

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| Sigma T | Completed in Final Term from 1st to 6th class (April – May) |

**Other**

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| NNRIT | Completed in the first term (post Halloween) 1st and 4th class only |

**Reporting and Scoring System for Standardised Tests**

STen Scores are the uniform result format through which the school reports pupil attainment to the Department of Education and Skills. This is processed by the Principal on-line through our Aladdin data system. These scores, from 1-10, indicate the pupil’s performance relative to that of her/his peer group throughout the country. These results of standardised tests are communicated to the parents/guardians of pupils in 1st to 6th Class in June also using the STen scores. Please see table below for a broad interpretation of test results for both literacy and numeracy. A detailed End of Year Report from the Class Teacher also informs parents of their child’s progress from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Informal reporting on a pupil’s progress may take place at any time throughout the school year or formally during parent/teacher meetings in term 1 of the school year.

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| STen Score Range | Descriptor |
| 8-10 | Well above average |
| 7 | High Average |
| 5-6 | Average |
| 4 | Low average |
| 1-3 | Well below average |

**Exemption from and Modifications to Standardised Testing**

In certain cases, and for a small number of pupils, test administration may be modified if considered necessary by the principal teacher, in consultation with parents and other colleagues (DES Circular 0138/2006). A STen score of 1 is inputted into the School’s data base (Aladdin) for pupils who are exempted from testing. The administration of a modified test and the location in which the test is administered, and other relevant information is recorded on Aladdin.

Pupils who are absent from school on the original test date are accommodated during a subsequent group or individual testing session. This will depend on resources of time and personnel available to the school to facilitate the administration of the test (s) in question.

**Recording of Test Results**

Standardised testing results are stored in (i) cloud format (ii) on the school’s database (Aladdin) and (iii) in hard copy in the ‘records storage press’. They are kept until the pupil reaches 25 years of age or for longer periods if pupils have an additional learning need.

Within the schools’ database (Aladdin), a class tracking system is in operation to track each child’s results throughout school from Senior Infants to Sixth Class. Results are also analysed, interpreted and recorded at a class and whole school level. They may also be STen Score Range Descriptor 8-10 Well above average 7 High Average 5 6 Average 4 Low average 1-3 Well below average used to inform School Self Evaluation (S.S.E.) and subsequent School Improvement Plans (S.I.P.). Please see school’s Data Protection Policy for more details.

**Transfer of Records to Post Primary and other Primary Schools**

The school uses the N.C.C.A.s Education Passport (available on NCCA.ie) to communicate pupil attainment, strengths and needs directly to post primary schools. Copies of the 6th class yearly reports are also forwarded to the relevant post-primary school when requested. The above takes place following the formal notification to Scoil Bhríde Nurney that the pupil(s) in question have been enrolled in the school concerned. More detailed reports and face-to-face meetings requested by other schools to which our pupils and in particular those with additional needs are due to attend, will only be considered provided there is support and written permission from parents.

**Validity of Standardised tests**

Class and Support teachers administer standardised tests to their own class, monitoring and observing pupils completing same\*. To further ensure validity of scores, these tests are:

1. Administered strictly in accordance with the directions contained in the Test Administration Manual for the test concerned.
2. Scoring is carried out by both support and class teachers who correct tests in a collaborative manner and is overseen by the Deputy Principal as part of their duties.
3. As professionals, teachers shall never “teach to the test.”
4. To preserve the integrity of the standardised testing process and to ensure the validity of test scores into the future, requests by parents/guardians to view/be given copies of their child’s/children’s completed tests will be declined. Teachers will however be available by appointment to discuss with parents/guardians any concerns they may have with regard to their child’s/children’s test results.

Under no circumstances may test manuals or booklets be removed from the school, shared with those other than the school’s teaching staff or copied in hard copy format or electronically.

*\*This is also a very valuable tool in assessment through teacher observation.*

**Diagnostic Tests**

This form of testing is needed to evaluate pupil attainment particularly when a pupil does not present as having made adequate progress after receiving direct intervention from the class teacher over a period of time. The Class and Support teachers consult with the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s) and permission is sought for diagnostic testing when necessary. (Please see Scoil Bhríde’s SEN Policy). The school, with parental support and permission, may engage outside fellow professionals to assist in pupil assessment.

**Success Criteria**

Some practical indicators of the success of the policy include:

* Assessment Procedures running smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects of assessment.
* Effective transfer of information from Class/Support teacher to Class/Support teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of each school year.
* Informative and clear information being communicated to parents on their child’s learning.

**Roles and Responsibility**

1. The Principal, Class and Support teachers and In–School Management (I.S.M.) are responsible for implementing the policy.
2. The Deputy Principal purchases and distributes tests
3. The Principal is responsible for forwarding of school attainment statistics to the D.E.S.
4. The Class and Support teachers administer evaluate/interpret and supervise tests.
5. All staff input pupil data into Aladdin at the end of each school year.

**Ratification of Assessment Policy**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_