



Document name	RETNS Guidelines and Procedures on Assessment	
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Introductory Statement:

The Board of Management (BoM) recognizes that appropriate assessment is integral to successful teaching and learning. It understands assessment as the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. Assessment is recognized as a dual process with two principal approaches - **Assessment for Learning** and **Assessment of Learning**. **AfL** is concerned with using evidence on an ongoing basis to inform teaching and learning. **AoL** is the process by which the teacher periodically records children's progress and achievement for the purpose of reporting to parents/guardians, teachers and other relevant persons.

The BOM supports the staff fully in implementing the school's agreed assessment strategy within a collaborative environment. This enables teachers to extend and enrich children's learning across all curriculum areas, as well as facilitate their ongoing personal development. The BOM also recognizes the important contribution that parents and guardians can make to the process of school assessment.

This policy was formulated by the staff in 2013 and revised and updated in 2018.

The policy is based on advice and information provided by:

- *The Primary School Curriculum (1999)*
- *Special Educational Needs- A Continuum of support (NEPS - 2007)*
- *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum-Guidelines for Schools (NCCA - 2007)*
- *Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools Special Education Teaching Allocation 0013/2017*
- *Circular 138/2006*
- *New Primary Language Curriculum (NCCA - 2017)*

Aims of our Assessment Policy:

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes and assist planning
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- To involve parents/guardians and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis

Purpose and Scope 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 teaching methodologies in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- To compile records of individual pupils' progress and achievement
- To facilitate communication between parents/guardians and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
- To facilitate the active involvement of pupils' in the assessment of the own work.

This policy applies to all the teaching staff and pupils of RETNS.

1 Roles and Responsibilities

1.1 BoM

The BoM is responsible for ensuring that this policy is in place and up-to-date, and has been formulated with the full input of teachers. It is also responsible for supporting the Principal in the execution of the school's agreed assessment strategy.

1.2 Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that these procedures are enacted and that an agreed assessment strategy is in place. In doing so, the Principal will be supported by the Deputy Principal.

1.3 Teachers

Class teachers are best placed to assess their pupils on a day-to-day basis and therefore have primary responsibility for their routine assessment. SEN staff will also assess pupils on a day-to-day basis and have primary responsibility for routine assessment in curricular areas where they are the primary provider of support to a pupil/group of pupils (e.g. Maths). The special educational needs (SEN) team has specific responsibility for coordinating standardized, screening and diagnostic testing.

1.4 Parents and guardians

Parents and guardians also have a key role to play in supporting their children's learning by providing the school with relevant information about their children and by cooperating with any individualized strategies put in place to optimize their children's learning and integration in the school community.

2 Approaches to assessment

All aspects of the school curriculum are assessed and procedures are in accordance with those outlined for each curricular area in the Primary School Curriculum. The two principal approaches to assessment, Assessment for learning (**AfL**) and Assessment of Learning (**AoL**) are used by teachers. Assessment is ongoing and appropriate to children's needs and available resources. The varying learning styles of children are explicitly acknowledged within the school. Particular attention is paid to early intervention. Assessment methods

range from child lead assessment to teacher lead assessment, and from informal (such as teacher observation) to formal (such as diagnostic screening for learning difficulties). Assessment is mentioned in each curriculum plan.

2.1 Assessment Methods and Recording of Assessment

- Day-to-day observation and evaluation by staff
- At point of entry to the school, teachers check for children's existing knowledge. They then assess their ongoing progress by observing the children, talking with them and appraising the work they have produced
- Use of checklists, tasks and simple tests (for example, blending of letter sounds, dictation and tables- Dolch Lists/Jolly Phonics Sound Checks)
- Self-assessment and peer assessment are encouraged, especially in the senior classes (Project work/Class presentations/Editing checklists)
- Rubrics/Evaluation sheets (pp.52- 54)
- Portfolio assessment
- Individual Writing profiles document three samples of writing per child each year.
- Children are afforded opportunities to present work/projects in a variety of different ways (for example, models, PowerPoint presentations, oral presentations, Mind maps) and through these opportunities to discuss and evaluate their learning
- ICT (videos/blogs)
- WALT/WILF and KWL techniques (pp.14-23, pp.84-85)
- Two stars and a wish
- Learning Logs
- Parental /pupil feedback or observation
- Completed Assignments (copies/homework etc.)
- Higher Order Questioning (pp.42-44)
- Conferencing (pp.24-27)
- Termly Maths Assessments
- Reading Records
- Assessment Copies
- Reflection Section of Cuntas Míosúil

The pages refer to *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum-Guidelines for Schools (NCCA -2007)*

2.2 Standardized Assessment Tests/Screening Test/Recording of Assessment and Testing

- All children are formally screened from senior infants until sixth class. If the school deems that the standard test is not appropriate for an individual child (for example, one for whom English is an additional language), other forms of assessment and screening are used
- The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) is administered during a child's fifth term of schooling. If early literacy needs are identified, parents and guardians are informed as soon as is practicable. School and home then work as partners through the **Forward Together Programme**. On completion of the programme, children are re-tested. This identifies those children who are eligible for continued early intervention support.
- The Drumcondra primary tests are used for testing children in maths, reading and spelling. Assessment takes place at the end of each school year for children from first to sixth class. The class teachers administer the tests, with the support of the

SEN team where necessary. These results are used to identify if there are any significant changes in a child's performance and are also a means of identifying children eligible for additional support. In the case of a significant decline, 15 or more percentile points, in a child's performance, parents/guardians are notified as soon as is practicable to discuss the implications of the results

- The Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT) is administered to pupils during the first term of second class. If specific needs are identified, parents and guardians are informed as soon as is practicable
- The BIAP test may be used in Infants/1st Class (Term 1), if it is deemed necessary
- Plans/targets, created as part of the Continuum of Support Staged Process, and external reports, are also used to assess and review the success of classroom, school and/or school plus interventions.

2.3 Further tests and Diagnostic Assessment

Where a child is continuing to cause concern, the school can use a range of further tests to pinpoint difficulties (e.g. dyslexia screening test). External tests/assessments by professionals such as psychologists or speech and language therapists may also be necessary. The Principal and SEN/class teachers will liaise with parents/guardians and outside agencies if further assessment is considered necessary. A staged process for referral is used, which is detailed in the school's SEN policy and procedures.

3 Management, Storage and Archiving of records

- The school maintains an individual file for each pupil. End of year reports and progress meeting notes are filed for each year alongside Infant records and standardised test results (1st-6th). Tests for the previous two years are kept in the bottom of the filing cabinet and shredded on year 3.
- These files are passed to the child's teacher at the beginning of each school year and staff work in partnership at all times to share relevant information about children
- All files are stored in a locked filing cabinet. Standardised test results are also stored on *Aladdin*. All information on *Aladdin* is password protected, with restricted access
- SEN teachers follow the Continuum of Support Guidelines and appropriate plans and records are maintained for each Stage of the staged process (e.g. Classroom interventions/Individual Learning Plans). These are stored centrally in the SEN filing cabinet and/or on *Aladdin*. Reports from outside agencies are stored centrally in the Principal's Office and the SEN filing cabinet.
- Teachers are made aware of the need to make and record comments about children in an objective and instructive manner
- Assessment and other information on individual children will be safely archived and retained for as long as is necessary under the terms of the school's Data Protection policy and Data Retention Schedule.

4 Reporting and interpreting the results of assessments

4.1 Interpreting Assessments

Teachers interpret assessments and use them for planning and setting target (differentiated work /revision of topic etc.). Assessment results are never interpreted in isolation, and are instead understood in the wider context of the child's development. Staff take a collaborative approach to planning and assessment and endeavour to share all relevant information.

4.2 Reporting to children

Teachers give appropriate assessment feedback to pupils on an ongoing and informal basis. Children are also encouraged to self-evaluate and engage in constructive peer assessment by means of learning logs, editing checklists, presentations etc.

4.3 Reporting to parents and guardians

The school can strengthen the capacity of parents/guardians to support their children's learning by sharing meaningful information about their progress, which draws from the full range of evidence used by teachers:

- Teachers communicate with parents/guardians on an ongoing basis around assessment issues as the need and opportunity to do so arise
- Furthermore, formal progress meetings for parents/guardians of all children are held each February and written report cards are issued for all children each June
- The results of standardised tests for Reading and Maths are given as STen scores and are included with the report card. STen scores are a ten-point scale derived from standard scores, with 1 representing the lowest category and 10 the highest. Report cards are issued before the end of the school year to give any parents/guardians, who may have concerns, sufficient opportunities to seek meetings with teachers before the summer vacation.

4.4 Reporting at school level

The Principal monitors, on *Aladdin*, the assessment information for all classes and uses this to track the general achievement of all pupils, the achievement of particular groups and to identify trends over time. The Principal is also made aware of any concerns regarding individual children that may arise from screening or diagnostic testing. In this way, assessment data can be used to highlight priorities for development; for example, changes to teaching approaches, need for staff training, or acquisition of resources. These are then incorporated into the school development plan or self-evaluation process as areas for improvement.

4.4 Reporting to the BoM

At the beginning of the new school year, the Principal reports to the BoM the aggregated assessment data from standardized tests. The BOM will allow sufficient time to reflect on any issues arising out of this, with a view to supporting the staff to maximize positive learning outcomes for all children.

4.5 Reporting to the Department of Education and Skills

The school will report aggregated standardized Maths and Reading test results to the Department of Education and Skills in line with guidelines issued by the Department.

4.6 Reporting to other schools

- Parents/guardians of children due to leave the school are asked in writing if the school may pass on information about their children to the new schools at which they will be enrolling. Since 1 June 2012, Principals are legally required to send a copy of the most recent report card, including information from standardized tests, to the primary or secondary school to which the child transfers. This information will be transferred to the new school only following the pupil's enrolment in that school. Similarly, additional documentation concerning children with SEN is forwarded to new/secondary school.

5 Related documentation:

Relevant school policies, whether already in place and being reviewed or being developed, shall be examined with reference to this policy to ensure consistency and to take account of any points arising that may need to be addressed. These policies shall include the RETNS policies on Data Protection and Special Educational Need and, also, the school plan.

Review:

This policy was ratified by the BOM in March 2018. It will be reviewed regularly and if necessary updated to take account of changing circumstances – for example updated guideless or other legislation or advice or from the Department of Education and Skills.

Contact details:

Queries about this policy should be addressed to the Principal in the first instance:

The Principal

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