

Scoil Mhuire Maigh Cuilinn



Polasaí Measúnaithe Assessment Policy

2017

1. Introduction

This policy was formulated by the Staff and Board of Management of Scoil Muire, with reference to the NCCA document Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools.

2. Relationship to School Ethos

We, the staff of Scoil Mhuire, Maigh Cuilinn, are dedicated to the creation of a pleasant, relaxed, safe, controlled learning environment providing for the personal, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual development of each child. We wish to enable each child to realize their maximum potential, to develop self-confidence, security and to develop as well adjusted human beings and responsible citizens. We believe that our Assessment Policy will help us to identify specific needs in children and to meet those needs in an effective and timely fashion, so as to support those children in achieving their own unique potentials.

3. Rationale

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Information arising from assessment enables our school to support children's current learning and to plan for their future learning. Assessment involves gathering information to understand better how each child is progressing at school, and using that information to further the child's learning. It is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using, and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes.

4. Aims and Objectives

The core objective of this policy is to identify specific learning needs in children at the earliest possible opportunity and respond effectively to those needs. An effective assessment policy is vital in this regard.

Effective implementation of this Assessment Policy will allow us to:

- Monitor children's progress
- Reveal what and how the children are learning
- Identify children who may need additional support
- Identify gifted children who require extension activities
- Provide children and parents with information regarding progress
- Help children to develop effective self-assessment skills
- Enable children to take ownership of and become active participants in their own learning
- Provide children with positive feedback regarding their learning
- Allow the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the children's learning
- Inform the work of teachers in terms of teaching strategies, planning and preparation
- Adapt, improve and coordinate assessment procedures within our school
- Use assessment data to inform target setting and to raise expectations and standards in line with the school self-evaluation process.

5. Assessment Procedures in Scoil Mhuire

This policy covers both **Assessment of Learning AOL** and **Assessment for Learning AFL**.

Assessment for Learning AFL

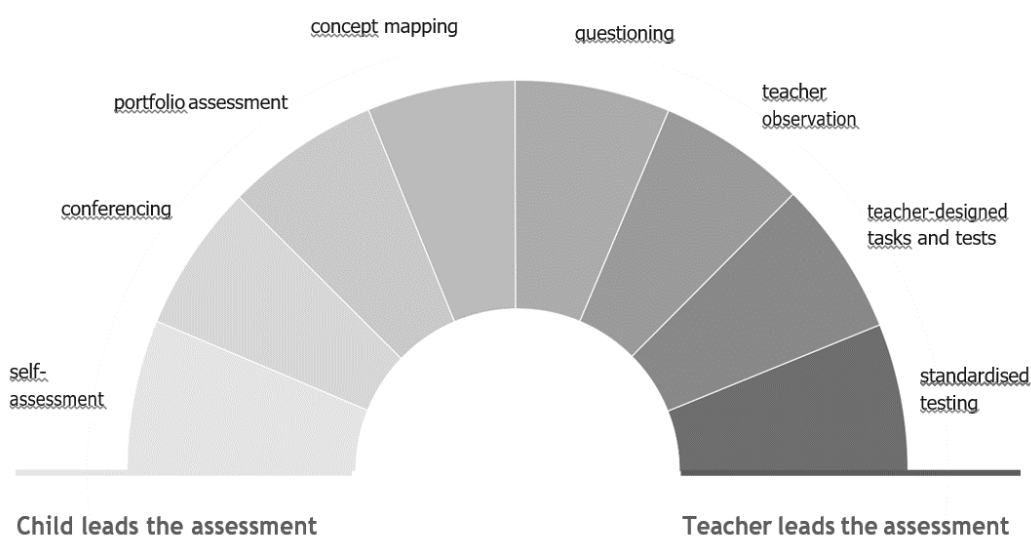
The teacher uses evidence on an ongoing basis to inform teaching and learning. In AFL the pupil assumes an active role in his/her own learning. In AFL, teachers and pupils focus on three key questions:

1. Where are pupils now in their learning?
2. Where are pupils going in their learning?
3. How will pupils get to the next point in their learning?

Assessment of Learning AOL

The teacher periodically records children's progress and achievement for the purpose of reporting to parents, teachers and other relevant persons. AOL focuses on medium and long-term assessment, i.e. assessing a child's learning at the end of a given period. AOL, which is for the most part teacher led, helps the teacher to plan future work, to set new targets, and to provide feedback and information for end-of-year assessment.

The Continuum of Assessment



A variety of child led and teacher led assessments is to be used in every classroom.

Child Led Assessments

Self-Assessment

Children are involved in self-assessment when they reflect on their own work, identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved, and then set personal learning targets for themselves. Self-assessment skills include effective questioning, reflection, problem-solving, comparative analysis, and the ability to share thoughts in a variety of ways. Self-assessment can be used by children of all ability levels and in all areas of learning and across all subjects. Self-assessment is an essential part of AFL. It enables the child to take greater responsibility for his/her own learning.

Activities to be used for Self-Assessment

Rubrics

Rubrics are a set of scoring guidelines that assess students' work and inform teaching. They are a useful assessment tool as well as a valuable teaching and learning tool. Rubrics list specific criteria for a project or piece of work. Each standard or criteria also includes a quality scale. Rubrics give pupils a clear grasp of what is expected of them and provide them with concrete feedback that shows areas of strength and areas in for improvement, allowing them to take responsibility for their own learning.

Questions for Self-Assessment

The teacher encourages the children to think and talk about their learning through a series of questions, such as:

- Where did I get stuck?
- What did I do?
- What was helpful?
- Who did I ask for help?
- What new thing did I learn?

The answers given by the children inform the teacher's teaching and allow children to reflect on and share their learning experience.

Evaluation Sheets

A set of differentiated tasks and activities given to various groups within a class. Specific success criteria apply to each task/activity. These are discussed before the task/activity is begun and at its conclusion. When the task/activity is finished, children reflect on what they have learned, how they have worked together and whether they have met the success criteria. They then complete an evaluation sheet, which is collected and commented on by the teacher and returned to the children.

KLW Grids

At the start of a lesson, children fill in a KWL grid, outlining:

- What they already know (have learned from a previous lesson)
- What they want to know (need to find out, have not understood or are otherwise having difficulty with)

The teacher scans the KWL grids, focusing the content and direction of the lesson on what the children have said they want to know.

At the end of the lesson, children complete the KWL grid, outlining:

- What they have learned

Self-Assessment Learning Folders (SALF)

Self-Assessment and Learning Folders provide a means for children to present samples of their work and their assessment of that work in any subject area. SALF folders provide a source of information that can be used by them to make assessment decisions about their learning.

During the implementation phase of this Assessment Policy, in the later half of the 2017/2018 school year, two Croke Park sessions will be used to allow teachers to familiarise themselves with the SALF Primary School Guidelines (Joan Keating and Siobhán Cahillane-McGovern) for Teachers and to view the SALF Teacher DVD.

SALF will be in use in all classrooms from March 2018 onwards.

Conferencing

Conferencing involves those involved in a child's learning coming together to discuss and share knowledge and understanding of the child's work. Conferencing can involve:

•Teacher/Child Conferences

An informal conference involving a discussion of criteria. The child feels comfortable and feels free to comment on his/her performance. The child sees the conference as an opportunity to learn about himself/herself as a learner. An Assessment Rubric forms a good basis for such a conference.

•Teacher/Teacher Conferences

Teachers meet to discuss children's work, helping them to develop common standards, design assessments and share ideas for methodologies and practices.

•Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher meetings allow both parties to learn more about how the child learns at home and in school and come up with ideas to support the child's learning.

It is our policy to conduct Parent-Teacher Meetings once a year, in mid-November. Parents are sent a letter in advance of these meetings to inform them of the nature and format of the meeting. Following the meeting, additional meetings may be arranged by appointment, if deemed necessary.

SEN Teachers meet with parents once per school term. Additional meetings may be arranged by appointment, if deemed necessary.

Assessment information may be shared at these meetings. Standardised test results are communicated to parents in terms of Age Based STen Scores.

Portfolio Assessment

Portfolios are collections of samples of children's work. They can exist in digital format or in hard copy. Portfolios reflect children's learning over a period of time. Creating a portfolio develops children's self-assessment skills.

Portfolios can be created to show:

- Improvement in work
- A range of work
- Strengths and interests
- Best work

During the implementation phase of this Assessment Policy, in the latter part of the 2017/2018 school year, use will be made of portfolios in English, Gaeilge and Maths, and from September 2019 their use will be extended SESE, SPHE, Arts, Music and Drama.

Concept Mapping

Concept mapping begins with a discussion of a topic. Children respond with key words that are used to create Concept Maps. These words are recorded by the teacher and/or children and are organised by the children in a way that enables them to describe relationships between concepts and sub-concepts. The number of concepts and relationships represented

shows the child's depth of understanding of the topic. Lines are used by children to represent relationships across concepts and sub-concepts. The number of relationships represented and a child's ability to describe these is a further indication of his/her depth of understanding of the topic.

Teacher Led Assessment

Questioning

This method of teacher-led assessment is the mainstay of all classroom-based assessment methods in Scoil Mhuire. Throughout the entire school day, teachers question children regarding their work what they have done, how they have done it and why. These questions are used, both formally and informally to assess knowledge and understanding and to guide the children in their learning.

Children are encouraged to ask questions of the teacher and of each other to help them to learn. The teacher models good questioning to enable children to ask their own good questions in order to aid their own learning. Children will be regularly given opportunities to ask questions. Teachers will create an atmosphere in which children feel comfortable in asking questions and will allow children sufficient time to formulate questions.

Teachers will also model listening to another person's question by looking at the child while he/she is asking the question; nodding to show understanding and paraphrasing the question to check that he/she has fully understood the question being asked.

Teacher Observation

Teacher Observation provides instantaneous information regarding a child's learning. Teachers will observe and note how children say, do or make things and thus identify the children's learning needs and preferences and determine how effectively they can be met. Teachers will also observe and note the way in which children interact and work with others.

Teacher Observations will consist of:

- Target Child Observation
The teacher focuses on a particular child to ascertain his/her progress, needs, etc.
- Event Samples
The teacher observes and notes particular events that build up a pattern of a child's behaviour over a period of time.
- Time Samples
Short, repeated, focused observations of a child's development.
- Anecdotal Observation
The teacher provides a written account of interesting instances of a child's development or behaviour.

Teacher-Designed Tasks and Tests

These can take the form of written or oral assessments or practical assignments developed by the teacher to assess the children's learning. They are used on an ongoing basis as a means of continuous assessment (AFL). They are also be used at the end a specific period of learning as AOL. The results of these tasks and tests will inform the teacher's planning and teaching strategies.

The following Teacher-Designed Tasks and Tests are to be used in the relevant classes

English Spellings and Litriú Gaeilge

A weekly test (usually Friday morning) in all classes from 1st to 6th, the results of which will be recorded and retained by the teacher.

Maths Tables

A weekly test (usually Friday morning) in all classes from 1st to 6th, the results of which will be recorded and retained by the teacher.

Maths Tests

Basic end of topic tests, in written form, sourced or designed by the teacher, to give a general indication of the children's grasp of concepts. Results to be recorded by the teacher using a basic scale: Green (proficient), Orange (progressing), Red (poor).

SESE

A variety of teacher designed tests in each of History, Geography and Science in classes from 3rd to 6th, the results of which will be recorded and retained by the teacher. Examples might be:

4th Class Geography: Counties of Ireland: Children match the name of the county to the number on a map.

5th Class History: The Normans: 15 multiple choice questions on The Normans

6th Class Science: Materials: 15 open-ended questions on Metals

Standardised Testing

Standardised tests are administered by the SEN Team during the last two weeks in May each year. The tests are then corrected by the Class Teacher, who then uploads the resultant data onto the Aladdin System.

The following Standardised Tests are administered to the following classes:

- Drumcondra Reading Test. 1st to 6th Classes.
- Drumcondra Spellings Test. 1st to 6th Classes.
- Sigma-T Maths Test. 1st to 6th Classes.
- Triail Ghaeilge Dhroim Conrach (Scoileanna Galltachta) Rang 2 go Rang 6.
- Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy
- Middle-Infant Screening Test
- Bellfield Infant Assessment Profile

A number of children with SEN and/or EAL may be exempted from these tests. The Class Teacher and relevant SEN Teacher will consult to decide if it is in the best interest of the child to attempt the test.

The resultant data testing in June will be used to monitor pupil progress and will inform classroom planning in September. Standardised Test scores will be analysed and discussed on a whole-school basis. Teachers will use the results to set specific targets to cater for the individual needs of children who are experiencing difficulty with Literacy or Numeracy. Results of Standardised Tests are communicated to parents at parent-teacher meetings in terms of Age-Based STen scores. Results are included in the end of year school report.

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic tests will be administered by a member SEN Team following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. Parents will be provided with test results. If further assessment is warranted, by outside professionals such as Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists of NEPS Psychologists, written consent of parents/guardians will be secured beforehand.

Diagnostic Tests may include:

- Jackson Phonic Tests
- Miscue analysis/running record
- Neale analysis of reading ability
- Schonell Reading and Spelling Tests
- Dolch Lists for Sight Vocabulary
- Informal testing of print awareness with left-right coordination, visual discrimination and oral language.

Also included can be:

- A sample of unaided writing
- Informal testing in Maths to include the conservation of number, problem solving, computation, Mathematical concepts and procedures.

Recording

Standardised Tests

Standardised testing is done in Scoil Mhuire in the final term of the school year; usually at the end of May. Teachers shall input data arising from the tests into Aladdin and send a hard copy of the test results to the office and to the relevant learning support/resource teacher(s), who will keep it securely. Teachers may retain a hard copy of the test results under lock and key in their classrooms. This copy must be sent to the office at the end of the school year.

Test booklets will be stored under lock and key in the classroom in which the test was done for a period on one year, i.e. until the next round of standardised testing, after which time they will be disposed of by shredding.

Other Forms of Assessment

Teachers shall maintain an Assessment Folder containing the results of Teacher Led forms of Assessment such as:

- Various Teacher Designed Tests
- Maths Assessment Tests
- Spellings Tests
- Scrúduithe Litríú Gaeilge
- Tables Tests

This folder shall be kept under lock and key in the relevant classroom. The contents of the folder, as appropriate, shall be forwarded to the following year's teacher at the end of June each year.

Access to Assessment Results

Assessment records of individual children are confidential. Direct access to individual, group or class assessment information may be given to the following designated persons/organisations, as appropriate:

- The Class Teacher and SEN Team via Aladdin Schools system
- The Class Teacher to whom the child is transferring
- Other Relevant Professionals with parental permission, such as:
 - NEPS Psychologists
 - SENO
- The Principal
- DES Inspectors
- The School Secretary (for recording purposes only)
- Parents/Guardians of the child(ren) in question
- Another school, Primary or Post-Primary, to which the child is transferring, subject to the written consent of the child's Parent/Guardian

Success Criteria

This policy will be considered successful if:

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined
- The SEN Team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Roles and Responsibilities

Class Teacher

- The administration, correction and recording of Class Based Assessments
- The correction and recording of Standardised Tests.
- Passing copy of Assessment Results to the SEN Team, the Principal and the following year's Class Teacher.

SESCO

- Assist the Principal with the coordination and implementation of this Assessment Policy.
- Assist the Principal with the sharing of Assessment Records with the relevant persons/organisations as per this policy (see section on Access to Assessment Results)

SEN Team

- The administration, correction and recording of Diagnostic Tests and the dissemination of the test results to class teachers, parents and principal.
- The administration of Standardised Tests.
- The analysis of Standardised test in order to identify pupils in need of support in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy.

Principal

- The coordination and implementation of this Assessment Policy.
- The sharing of Assessment Records with the relevant persons/organisations as per this policy (see section on Access to Assessment Results)

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on Wednesday 6th December 2017. It will be sent to Parents/Guardians via the Parent Portal and made available for download from the School Website.

Implementation

Many aspects of this Assessment Policy are current procedure in our school. The policy in its entirety will be implemented from the beginning of the 2018 calendar year.

Review

This policy will be reviewed and amended by the Support Teaching Team as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

References

D.E.S. Circulars 02/05 - 24/03

D.E.S. Learning Support Guidelines 2000

NCCA Assessment Guidelines for Schools 2007