What is Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering and recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes.

(Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum and Guidelines for schools; NCCA 2007 p7)

Assessment of Learning (AOL) and Assessment for Learning (AFL) are an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Teachers and all staff in St. Tiarnach's observe and discuss regularly (Staff meetings and Croke Park meetings) both work and progress and completed work.

The Cuntas Miosiúl undertaken by staff reflects planning, teaching, evaluation and assessment.

Why Assess Teaching and Learning

Our reasons are as follows

- To inform teachers setting of targets and activities for individual pupils, groups and the whole class
- To inform the school improvement plan and to revise and update whole school targets
- To assist planning and evaluate and modify teaching strategies based on the outcomes of assessment
- To inform "within class groupings" a differentiation of work
- To identify pupils with learning difficulties
- To use assessment outcomes to assist and improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning in St. Tiarnach's
- To effectively and sensitively use assessment outcomes to assist pupils to reflect on their own learning
- To be able to provide accurate information about pupil's progress to relevant parties particularly parents
- To evaluate pupil achievement in curriculum areas in comparison with national norms

(1) Teachers may use many different and varied tools to assess children's learning and teaching effectiveness
  - Teacher observation
  - Teacher reflection
  - Teacher designed tasks and tests
  - Pupil profiles
  - Work samples, portfolios & projects
  - Tracking of reading material (Guided Reading/R. Recovery)
  - Checklists

(2) The above assessment methods are used across the whole school, at the discretion of individual teachers, depending on the requirements of individual pupils, class level or subject and parents are given feedback on a regular basis.

(3) Depending on the subject and the class level and the needs of individual pupils, teachers may assemble portfolios of pupil assignments, work samples, projects etc.

(4) The school's plan for each curriculum subject addresses the issue of assessment

(5) Examples of teacher designed tasks / tests

- Spelling Test/Dictation Sentences
- Table Tests
- Termly assessment in maths
- Assessments in Irish / English / maths designed by teachers
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(6) Pupils are encouraged to become involved in the assessment of their own work / progress. Examples include the use of
- KWL
- Self-editing / drafting / redrafting
- Discussion (Group and Individual)
- Comments good / needs improvement?
- Self-evaluation using symbol e.g. (C.U.P.S.) c/f Eng. Policy
- Pupil surveys⬚
- This data will be stored in assessment folders / children's copies
- Reflection after Parent/Teacher update/meeting

Standardised Testing:
D.E.S. require all schools to assess children using standardised tests.
The school has alternated in recent years between Micra T, Sigma and the Drumcondra profiles. All classes from First class upwards are tested. The tests are usually administered in the last week of May or first week of June by the class teacher. Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in the administration office. The SET analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

- Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card and at parent / teacher meetings.
- The STEN score is used to explain results to parents.
- All scores are imported to each pupils individual profile on the Aladdin system. Class scores/data are also maintained on Aladdin.
- Teachers compare standardised test scores yearly to identify progress or dis-improving pattern.
- Concerns are discussed and intervention may be implemented
- When children score below 12th percentile a diagnostic test may be used to explore where his/her difficulties/challenges lie

- Children may be prioritised for Reading Recovery at the end of Snr. Infants/1st class – (Ref:- School S.E.N.) policy)
- I.E.P.'s and group educational programmes may be determined

Screening:

First step in identifying pupils who may need Learning Support in Literacy or Numeracy is for the class teacher to administer screening tests.

The particular screening measures that are administered will depend on the age and stage of development of the pupils.

In Infants Early Intervention Testing which includes the Drumcondra Profiles may be used. Senior Infants, Drumcondra Profiles and N.R.I.T.

From the end of First Class onwards Standardised Norm Referenced Tests are used, specifically the Drumcondra English Test, Sigma T Maths Tests, Drumcondra Spelling & MicraT.
The Principal, Dep. Principal in conjunction with class teachers, analyse the results of these tests. The results of end of year testing are included in end of year reports.

Diagnostic Testing:

Diagnostic tests have an important role to play in identifying children with learning difficulties. The administration of such tests from Senior Infants is in keeping with the approach recommended by Circular 02/05 where a staged approach is used by individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing. A list may include

- "Mata sa Rang"
- Reading recovery Test Bundle
- Jolly Phonics Assessment
- Quest
- Maths Magic Assessment
- Busy at Maths Assessment
- Dolch Reading List
- Neale Analysis
- M.I.S.T.
- Aston Index
- Belfield Infant Assessment Programme

Psychological Assessments:

Each year some children will be identified for assessment / observation. The Principal meets parents & a consent form is signed by the parents if the child is targeted for psychological assessment.
The Principal will organise the assessment.
Children who present with possible SLT / OT needs will be identified by teachers to the Principal. The Principal and / or the class teacher will advise parents re: getting a medical referral from their G.P.
The results of assessments will guide the drafting of an IEP for the pupil if appropriate. It determines the level of intervention either LS, General Allocation or an IEP.

The Principal will ensure that details of relevant reports are transferred with all 6th class pupils on their transfer to Second Level Education.

Recording Results Of Assessment:

Test booklets, end of year reports, copies of assessments etc. are kept on Aladdin system or within Principal's office on file.

All data is sensitive to each child.

In line with the National Strategy to improve Literacy & Numeracy standardised test results are given to the relevant second level school on transfer from Primary to Second Level.

End of year assessment results will determine who will receive LS for the following year.

The standardised test results will be given to the BOM to review overall school standards in Literacy / Numeracy. (No individual results will be identifiable)

Assessment For Learning

Success Criteria:

This policy is considered successful if;
- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers
- Overall class results are maintained and or improved where necessary

Roles and Responsibilities:

Mainstream 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 supersedes previous policies and is effective from Autumn 2015.

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in Oct 2015.

Review Timetable:

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

References:

DES Circular 02/05 – 24/03 – 56/12.
DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000
www.sess.ie
Working Together to make a Difference for Children – NEPS
Appendix A: Assessment in the Primary School
Appendix B: Circular 02/05