
Assessment Policy

St. Martin de Porres
National School

19617W

Assessment Policy

Introductory Statement and Rationale

This policy was formulated by the staff of St. Martin de Porres N.S. The policy is based on advice and information provided in the Primary Curriculum, the NCCA Website, the NCCA booklet Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools and the New Resource Teaching Allocation Model. 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 characteristic spirit of the school

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of teaching processes. Assessment activities used in this school will contribute to pupil learning and development by gathering relevant information to guide each pupil's further learning (assessment for learning) and by providing information on each pupil's achievement at a particular point in time (assessment of learning).

Aims of our Assessment Policy

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To assist teachers' long and short-term planning
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis and to establish a firm link between assessment and decision making with regard to future strategies, content and methodologies in the classroom

Purpose 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 their 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 attainment
- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs

Range of Assessment Methods used throughout the school

Both assessment of learning and assessment for learning will be used by teachers to make professional judgements about pupil achievement/progress. Deciding what to assess will be based on the curriculum objectives in each curriculum area/subject and on what the teacher intends to help the children to learn. Each teacher will use the most appropriate assessment method to measure the extent to which children have achieved these objectives.

Assessment for Learning

The following are among some of the methods of informal assessment that are used in the school;

- Teacher observation
- Teacher questioning, use of mini whiteboards
- Teacher designed tasks and tests, pre-tests, summative tests
- Work samples, portfolios & projects
- Checklists

Pupil Self- Assessment

It is important that children reflect on and are aware of their own learning. We encourage children to become involved in the assessment of their own work progress. Teachers may incorporate some of the following self-assessment techniques in their teaching;

- KWL charts
- Two stars and a wish
- Self-editing / drafting / re-drafting
- Checklists
- Self-evaluation

Teachers may use the following three steps to include WALT and WILF to make learning meaningful and help develop pupil's ability to self-assess.

- (a) Setting clear learning targets / outcomes
- (b) Followed by then setting criteria to make judgements before the child commences their work
- (c) On completion by assessing their work according to the agreed criteria already set

Assessment of Learning

Standardised Tests

The school uses the Micra-T and Sigma-T tests for pupils from 1st- 6th class. The purpose of these tests is to establish levels of attainment. The tests are usually administered at the end of May or first week of June by the class teacher. Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on Aladdin.

The SEN team 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.

Allocation of learning support

We aim to meet the diverse learning needs of every child. We take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning. In planning our support, the 'Planning Template' outlining the 6-point action plan below will be utilised.

Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (Primary Guidelines, P19-20)

Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs	Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data and any information from parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests). Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.
Action 2: Setting targets	Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets (SMART) for each pupil at each level of the continuum of support.
Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches	Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the continuum of support. Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.
Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes	Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.

Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources	Cross-reference the needs of pupils at school support and school support plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place. Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.
Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress	Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored: • At whole-school and classroom support level by all teachers • At the school support and school support plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers.

When allocating additional support in literacy and numeracy, priority will be given to pupils who are performing at or below the 10th percentile in standardised tests. Pupils may be excluded from the tests if in the view of the principal they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them taking the test or in the case of newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting the test would be inappropriate.

Parental permission for the carrying out of assessments has previously been granted at the time of the child's enrolment in the school.

- Early Intervention Testing which includes the B.I.A.P. may be used in infant classes.
- The M.I.S.T test is administered by class teachers or support teachers in the second term of senior infants. Guidelines regarding this have recently changed, possible area for review.
- The Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test is administered at the same time as the Sigma-T tests.
- From the end of First Class onwards, Standardised Norm Referenced Tests are used, specifically the Micra-T English Test and the Sigma-T Maths Tests
- The Cat 4 is administered to first class pupils in the second term.

The principal, in conjunction with all staff, analyses the results of these tests.

The Learning Support teacher will then timetable support for these children. Results determine the allocation of learning support/resource hours in the school and the nature of the support provide (in-class or withdrawal) as part of the school support/support for some.

A student support file will be opened for each child who receives additional support. Parents will be asked to sign a consent form before support commences and are consulted throughout the year to discuss targets for their child and progress being made.

We use guidelines and recommendations from the following external assessments to set targets for progression of skills on an individual basis;

- Psychological assessments
- Speech and Language assessments
- Occupational Therapy Assessments
- Physiotherapy Assessments
- Play-Therapy Assessments

Psychological Assessments:

A number of pupils may require access to School Support Plus and intervention from outside agencies such as NEPS. Children requiring this additional support, will be identified for assessment / observation at the beginning of the academic year. Referrals to NEPS are limited and are on a basis of need. A Request for Involvement of NEPS Psychologist: Direct Casework form is completed and signed by the class teacher, Principal and parents if a child is prioritised for psychological assessment.

The principal will liaise with NEPS Psychologist to arrange and facilitate assessment.

Note: The results of external assessments will determine the level of intervention as part of the staged approach to supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs.

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

Recording of documents

Learning support teachers administer diagnostic tests when necessary and interpret the results. If the diagnostic assessment indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial this will be arranged. In consultation with the classroom teacher, learning outcomes will be drawn up as part of student support files.

Student Support Files are saved securely on Google Drive. Standardised test results are recorded securely on Aladdin.

Teachers use agreed terminology for reporting on children's progress and achievement based on STEN scores. Comments and observations will be recorded in an objective and instructive manner.

Individual reports will be used to inform teachers of a child's assessment scores. Parents will also be updated about their child's progress at parent teacher meetings.

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

Purpose of assessments

As a school we are developing good practice in assessing learning. Results are used to select children for;

- Selecting necessary interventions if required
- To measure the progress of the children's learning
- To evaluate for planning targets of class teachers and SEN teachers
- As a guide for professional development
- To guide the school to select target areas of various subjects for further school development planning
- To report to parents
- To highlight good practice and school strengths
- To keep a clear focus on good teaching and learning
- To inform the BOM and DES of levels attained in Numeracy & Literacy

Success Criteria:

- This policy is considered successful if a range of informal and formal assessment methods are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning.
- Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different areas of assessment.
- Transfer of information between teachers happens efficiently at the beginning/end of school year.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Management of St. Martin de Porres holds responsibility for the policy. It is implemented by the principal. The Principal, Class Teachers and Support Teachers assume shared responsibility. Based on the Continuum of support it is the responsibility of the class teacher to implement Stage 1- Classroom interventions at class level. The responsibilities are shared with the Support Team at Stage 2- School Support. The principal is involved at all stages of the continuum of support and assumes a primary role at Stage 3- School Support Plus, 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:

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Review Timetable:

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