

Assessment Policy Crusheen National School

Introductory Statement

This policy was originally drafted following the decision to review the existing policy in May 2014. 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 Circular 0138-2006. It was formulated by the staff and followed a review of present methods of assessment.

Policy Rationale:

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. The reason assessment is necessary is to identify areas of strength and weakness in pupils, to monitor progress and to predict areas of possible difficulty. The policy endeavours to identify at the earliest possible opportunity children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective. The school values both formal/ informal forms of assessment and assessment takes place on a continual basis. Assessment will aid the pupils in achieving their full potential and assist the teachers in the planning of their work.

Definition of Assessment:

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is concerned with children's progress and achievement. It involves gathering information to understand how each child is progressing at school and using that information to further a child's learning. Assessment, therefore, involves much more than testing and is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the child.

Aims

The principal purpose of assessment is to provide the teacher with continuous detailed information about children's knowledge, their grasp of concepts and their mastery of skills. It also

- 1) Monitors the rate of children's language development and the effectiveness with which they are using language to learn
- 2) Identifies strengths and weaknesses assisting the teacher to adopt planning strategies to meet students needs-*Formative Assessment*
- 3) Indicates specific areas of ability/ learning difficulty. This is particularly important in literacy and numeracy. *Diagnostic Assessment*
- 4) Helps form a profile of children as a basis for reporting to teachers, parents and others-*Summative Assessment*
- 5) Helps to monitor a pupil's progress in relation to themselves through the pupil profile card *Ipsative Assessment*
- 6) Assessment can help the teacher to plan the most effective learning experiences for the child.
- 7) To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis

It is important to bear in mind that assessment covers all areas of the revised curriculum and to refer to the detailed sections of the curriculum books. Pupils' musical, physical, social,

artistic, emotional, natural/environmental development must be analysed and strengths and weaknesses in these areas developments.

Methods of Assessment

1. Teacher Observation
2. Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests
3. Work Samples, Portfolios and Projects
4. Diagnostic Tests
5. Standardised Tests

1. **Teacher Assessment:** This is the form of assessment most consistently used by teachers when they observe children at work, correct homework and class work and engage in discussion. Much of it is unrecorded but it can be useful to make brief notes from time to time about particular learning requirements.
2. **Teacher-Designed Tasks and Tests:** This is more planned and frequently used monitoring. It is followed by evaluation of children's mastery of concepts, skills etc. and can provide the basis for future planning.
3. **Work Samples, Portfolios and Projects:** A cumulative record of performance can be created by collecting samples of children's work e.g. Self Assessment Folders. Self Assessment Learning Folders are in use throughout the school. Children will reflect on their learning and make choices about their own work. This folder belongs to the child, will reflect their interests and talents and they will bring it home on occasion, to demonstrate to their parents the gains achieved.
4. **Diagnostic Tests:** Following teacher observation screening tests are administered to children experiencing difficulties e.g. miscue analysis to detect writing errors. Such screening is followed by diagnostic tests administered by the LST or RT. Early screening of children with language difficulties is important-the best time being early in the second term of Senior Infants. Teachers should take into account critical variables such as age, language competence, physical ability and pre-enrolment records as well as the result of diagnostic testing when deciding on intervention. A process of consultation with class teacher, previous class teacher, principal, learning support/ resource teacher and parent will ensue.
The following diagnostic test is in use in Crusheen N.S.-
QUEST Diagnostic Test
5. **Standardised Tests:** These will be done each year in the final term. In assessing mastery of these the teacher is provided with a measurement of ability to age or a standardised percentile scale.

The following standardised tests are in use throughout the school:

- Sigma-T-June each year from 1st to 6th class
 - Micra-T-June each year from 1st to 6th class
 - MIST-In the second term of Senior Infants
 - Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test 9November and May)
 - CAT- (Cognitive Abilities Test) Fourth Class
 - Following Circular 56-2011, mandatory testing takes place at the end of 2nd, 4th and 6th class.
6. **Psychological Assessment:** If Stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention, the class teacher/principal will contact the parents to received permission to make an onward referral to NEPS. If NEPS is unable to provide support, commissioning a private psycho-educational assessment may be considered. An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it learning support/support hours or an Individual Education Plan.

The most common form of assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher designed tests, projects and homework. These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers.

Recording the Results of Assessment:

- Access to records will be determined by school policy on Record-Keeping and the Data Protection Act.
- Teachers have agreed terminology for reporting on children's progress and achievement. Comments and observations will be recorded in an objective and constructive manner.
- Information based on assessment will be transferred appropriately for example teacher to pupil; teacher to teacher; teacher to parent, and primary to second level school.
- Assessment information will be safely stored to facilitate access to it by former pupils at any stage until their 21st birthday.

Success Criteria:

- 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 aspects.
- Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently and the beginning/end of school year.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Mainstream, Special Education Teacher and the Principal will assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in motion staged interventions and class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Teacher. The principal assumes a primary role in Stage 3, when a psychological assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication will always be kept open.

Implementation:

This policy supersedes the previous policy and is effective from March 2014.

Timetable for Review

This policy was reviewed in 2016 and will be reviewed in November 2017.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____ and communicated to parents thereafter.