# St Ciaran & St Manchan’s N.S.

# Assessment Policy

## Introduction & Rationale

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 an important aspect of this. St Ciaran’s Mixed NS aims to motivate pupils and encourages them to achieve to the best of their ability. In line with our ethos, it is also important that assessments involve parents/guardians in the process.

## Definition of Assessment

Assessment refers to all activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. St Ciaran’s Mixed NS is focussed on best practice for assessment both “of learning” and “for learning."

## Relationship to School Ethos

Our school vision states that every child has an opportunity to be happy, safe and able to learn. Therefore, our school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each individual child.

An effective Assessment Policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

## Aims and Objectives

The primary aims and objectives of the policy are:

• To facilitate reflective teaching and enhance pupil learning.

• To create a procedure for monitoring achievement.

• To track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers.

• To highlight difficulties in learning in order to provide intervention strategies

• To identify gifted and able or talented children who require extension activities

• To keep records of attainment that will inform the reporting process

• To use validated assessment data to inform target setting and to raise expectations and standards

## Policy Content

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils so that adequate strategies are in place early enough to facilitate meeting their needs. These strategies may include pupil self-assessment, two-way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programmes through differentiation and Individual Education Plans.

## Standardised Testing

Standardised testing takes places in the third term of each school year. The school uses the following tests at each class level:

* Junior Infants: The Belfield Infant Screen Programme
* Senior Infants: MIST
* 1st Class upwards: Micra T and Sigma T

The outcomes of testing are used to monitor pupils’ progress. These are then used to inform classroom planning or as part of the decision to allocate extra support to children. In line with the Department of Education’s Literacy and Numeracy Plan, the school must send data to the Department of Education, although no child will be identified individually in these reports.

Results are stored electronically on the Aladdin Admin System. Parents of 2nd,4th and 6th Classes are invited to speak with the class teacher at the end of the school year re performance on Standardised tests.

## In-Class Assessment

Every curriculum subject in our school is assessed. Staff are required to have an assessment section on school plans within their own short and long term planning. Teachers will also have one or more of the following in their classrooms to track assessment:

* a specific assessment folder
* a section within their own plans for recording of assessment
* portfolio of work from children
* electronic medium for recording assessment
* Aladdin- portfolio of work

All curriculum subjects should be assessed by teachers including all core and non-core subjects.

## Types of Assessment

The school follows the **NCCA guidelines on Assessment in the Primary Classroom**. These are summarised on p12 and p13 of the document. They are listed below with page reference numbers for fuller explanations:

* Self-assessment page 14
* Conferencing page 24
* Portfolio assessment page 30
* Concept mapping page 36
* Questioning page 42
* Teacher observation page 46
* Teacher-designed tasks and tests page 54
* Standardised testing page 60.

## Record Keeping

The school/classroom teacher keeps records of the following assessments.

* Running records of P.M Benchmarking Kits, levels
* End of year reports
* Parent-teacher meeting notes
* Pupil work samples in all curricular subjects - in copies, scrapbooks, workbooks, etc.
* Drawing Portfolio/Art folder for children to show progress in Drawing strand of Visual Arts

Other examples that teachers may keep records of are as follows:

* End of term maths and literacy assessment
* Teacher observation notes made throughout the year
* End of year maths test score.
* Standardised assessment results
* Verbal handover meeting between teachers. Teachers discuss educational needs of class and individual children.
* Reading ability records, eg PM Reading levels
* In-class assessments
* SWST Spelling profiles

At the end of each school year, a teacher will pass on assessment information to the next teacher. This can be in the form of an informal or formal meeting but written records are shared and an Assessment folder goes from classroom to classroom as the child progresses through the school. These records are then stored in a storage box located in a locked box in a locked storage area at the back of the Gym.

Results of Standardised tests and professional reports are saved and stored on Aladdin and are password protected.

At the end of Sixth Class a copy of the NCSE Student Passport is forwarded to the pupils chosen secondary school, once confirmation of enrolment has been received.

## Screening

The screening methods used to identify learning strengths and needs by class teachers

in our school are:

* Teacher observation (throughout the year)
* Use of homework, teacher-designed tests & projects (throughout the year)
* PM Benchmarking - Reading/Comprehension Assessment to identify reading levels.
* Standardised Tests listed above
* Non Reading Intelligence Tests ( term , 1st and 5th class,)
* Behaviour Checklists (as needed)
* Belfield Infant Assessment Programme - Junior Infants.
* Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
* Drumcondra Tests of Early numeracy - Senior Infants

The BIAP is used to assess early infant skills such as gross motor skills, fine motor skills, etc. The results will inform both the teacher and parents about how these skills can be improved if necessary and may be used to form part of a process for further support whilst in the school.

Permission to administer these tests and observations is sought on enrolment into our school.

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. The MIST and BIAP are administered on a class basis around Easter time of the year.

Screening is used to initiate the staged approach to intervention.

## Diagnostic Assessment

If a child requires learning support or resource hours, a range of assessments or checklists may be administered by a member of the Special Educational Needs Team following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents / guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by DES Circular 02/05 where a staged / layered approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing / psychological assessment. Parents will be provided with test results and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission will be sought and a consent form will be completed.

## Diagnostic Testing

The diagnostic tests used in the school include:

* PM Benchmarking Kit - running records
* Dolch Reading Test
* Jolly Phonics Screening
* Ballard maths assessment (under consideration)
* Jackson Phonics Test
* Single Word Spelling Test, (SWST)
* Busy at Maths Assessments & Pupil Profiling, using student level rather than Class level.

**Recording & Access to assessment results**

Results will be recorded in the teacher Assessment folder and will be locked in a filing cabinet in the classroom. This folder moves with the child from room to room.

Results will also be stored centrally on the Aladdin Admin System and will be password protected.

The NCSE Pupil Passport for 6th Class will be posted to the chosen Secondary School, once pupil enrolment has been officially confirmed.

## Roles and Responsibilities: Class Teacher

* Responsible for all assessment in his/her class including the administration, correction and recording of tests as outlined for classes.
* Responsible for emailing Cúntas Míosúil to principal.
* Scores on standardised tests should be recorded properly on Aladdin, and filed in the child's folder in the classroom.
* **Special Class Teacher**: Same responsibility as mainstream class teacher, even when child is integrating into mainstream class.
* **Support Teacher:** Responsible for the administration, correction and recording of diagnostic tests on advice from the class teacher. The support teacher should pass on the test results to class teachers.
* **Principal:** Overall responsibility for all assessment in the school and ensuring that this policy is being upheld.

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## Ratification

Ratified by Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal

### Appendix

Link to NCCA Assessment: <http://action.ncca.ie/>