



Assessment Policy

December 2021

Ennis National School

This policy is a record of practice in Ennis National School regarding assessment and record keeping in the different areas of the curriculum by individual teachers in their various roles, and by the educational services we access. It was formulated by the school staff. It is informed by the Curriculum Statements, Curriculum Guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills, NCCA Assessment in the Primary School, Circular 56/2011- Initial steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and by the completed policies in various curricular areas.

The purpose of assessment in Ennis National School is to provide continuous detailed information about pupils' development, their knowledge, their grasp of concepts and their mastery of skills. This will in turn inform, guide and direct teaching & learning in our school. We acknowledge that assessment is an essential component of a successful teaching and learning environment.

1. Introduction

This policy was drawn up with the full collaboration of all staff members within the context of the new Primary Language Curriculum, the Revised Primary School Curriculum (1999), the 1998 Education Act and the NCCA Guidelines (2007). The policy was most recently reviewed in December 2021.

In Ennis National School, we recognise that assessment is an integral process of primary education, and that assessment procedures are contingent on the relationship between the curriculum and the child's interaction with it in the learning process.

In this context, when using assessment as part of teaching and learning, the teacher

- gathers and records information about what and how children are learning
- uses appropriate methodologies and classroom organisational strategies
- explores with the children what successful learning looks like
- shares with the children what their new learning will involve
- plans new learning, using assessment information and curriculum objectives.
(NCCA Guidelines, 2007)

We adhere to the NCCA definition of assessment as “the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes” (NCCA, 2007).

2. Rationale

- To review the existing policy for assessment in our school
- To ensure that our approach in Ennis National School reflects current educational practice
- To inform and enhance teaching and learning in our school
- To set out the use and purpose of standardised testing in Ennis National School
- To set out the use and purpose of diagnostic testing in our school.

3. Aims

- To evaluate pupil learning and to monitor pupil progress
- To monitor learning processes and learning styles
- To conduct *Assessment for Learning* - to help guide teachers with short term and long term planning

- To conduct *Assessment of Learning* - to generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievements over time
- To involve parents, guardians and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths and needs
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole-school basis
- To establish the necessary and appropriate tools and approaches to gather assessment data, for reporting to parents

4. Purposes of Assessment

In ENS the motivation for assessment is:

- To gather and interpret data at an individual, class and whole school level
- To interpret individual pupils' data in relation to class and national norms
- To identify the specific learning needs of pupils and groups of pupils, including the more able
- To monitor and compile records of pupils' progress and attainment
- To facilitate communication between parents, teachers and other professionals about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
- To facilitate the involvement of pupils in assessing their own work
- To enable teachers to monitor and modify their planning in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed

5. Approaches to Assessment

In Ennis National School, we emphasise two aspects of assessment that are central to the teacher's work.

Assessment for Learning	Assessment of Learning
<p>The teacher uses evidence on an ongoing basis to inform teaching and learning (AfL).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where are children now in their learning? • where are children going in their learning? • how will children get to the next point in their learning 	<p>The teacher focuses more on medium and long-term assessment (AoL).</p> <p>AoL generally involves assessing a child's learning at the end of a given period, such as the end of a unit of work, a week, a term, or a year.</p>
Pupil-centred and pupil-directed	Teacher-led
Goal is to enable learners to further their own learning	Goal is to establish levels of attainment of curriculum objectives
Providing feedback to children is central to AfL.	AoL also helps the teacher to plan future work, to set new targets, and to provide

	feedback and information for end of year assessment.
It usually takes place in the daily interactions between teachers and children.	
Using AfL, the teacher supports the pupils in their work and to plan ahead.	
The teacher can also use information from AfL to evaluate his/her teaching.	

Characteristics of Assessment for Learning

At Ennis National School we aim to ensure that staff:

- Share learning objectives (intentions/goals) with pupils
- Help pupils to know and to recognise the success criteria they are aiming for
- Provide clear and motivating feedback that leads pupils to identify where they have succeeded and what they should do next to improve
- Have a commitment that every pupil can improve
- Involve both staff and pupils in reviewing and reflecting upon pupils' performance and progress
- Involve pupils in being able to assess themselves and their peers
- Adjust planning and teaching to take account of the results of assessment.

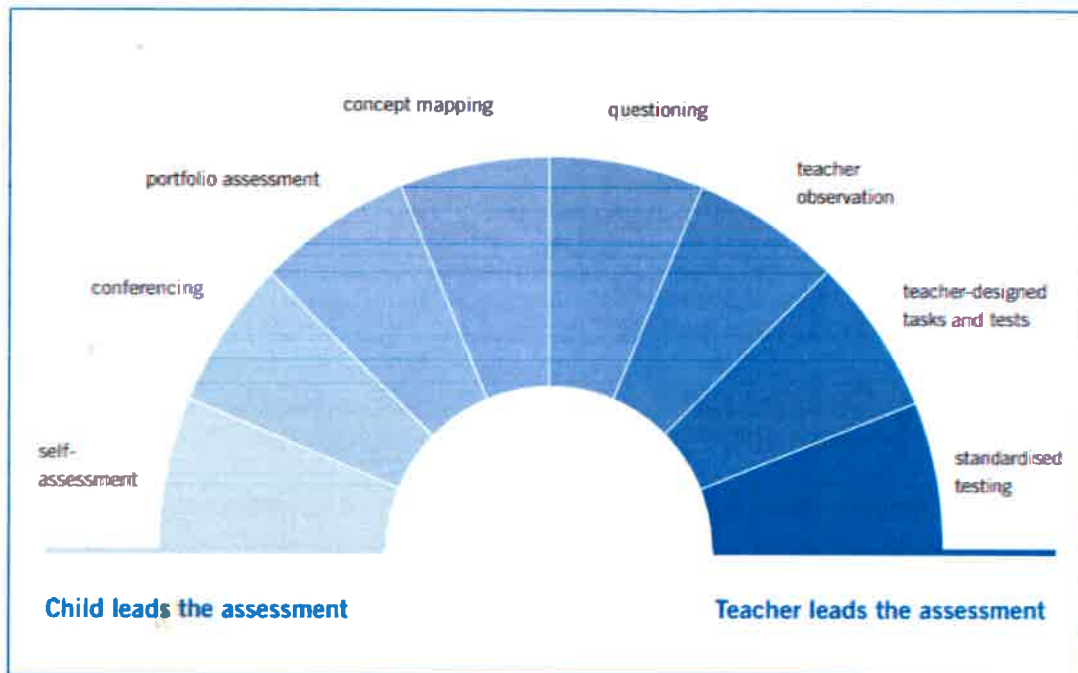
6. Assessment Practices

We employ a wide variety of assessment strategies that are based on the Continuum of Assessment. (NCCA, 2007)

The following 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. In addition, parents are given feedback on a regular basis.

Assessment practices in Ennis National School incorporate some or all of the following approaches.

Figure 2: A continuum of assessment methods



Standardised Tests used in Ennis National School	
Literacy	Numeracy
<p>Senior Infants – MIST Literacy Assessment Drumcondra Pictures and Words</p> <p>First Class – Drumcondra Reading Test – Level 1</p> <p>Second Class – Drumcondra Reading Test – Level 2</p> <p>Third Class – Drumcondra Reading Test – Level 3</p> <p>Fourth Class – Drumcondra Reading Test – Level 4</p> <p>Fifth Class – Drumcondra Reading Test – Level 5</p> <p>Sixth Class – Drumcondra Reading Test – Level 5</p> <p>All class groups from 1st- 6th Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)</p> <p>All class groups from Junior Infants to 6th Class complete the PM Benchmarking Tests to assess reading fluency and comprehension.</p>	<p>Senior Infants – Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy</p> <p>First Class – Sigma-T - Level 1</p> <p>Second Class – Sigma-T - Level 2</p> <p>Third Class – Sigma-T - Level 3</p> <p>Fourth Class – Sigma-T - Level 4</p> <p>Fifth Class – Sigma-T - Level 5</p> <p>Sixth Class – Sigma-T - Level 5</p>
Intelligence Tests	
<p>Third Class – New N.R.I.T. N.V.R.T.</p>	<p>3rd Class</p>

Social	
'My Thoughts About School' Checklist	Junior Infants – Sixth Class
Additional Assessment Methods used in Ennis National School	
Teacher-designed tasks and tests	Written or Oral Assessments Practical Tasks
Teacher Observation	This includes listening to how pupils describe their work and their reasoning
Teacher Questioning	Providing a high proportion of open questions (with reference to Bloom's taxonomy) Providing time for pupils to think about and discuss their responses to questions (pair share ideas/talking partners) Providing supplementary questions to extend understanding Providing questions that encourage pupils to reflect on their thinking
Peer Questioning	Providing pupils with opportunities to generate their own questions
Concept Mapping	Mind Maps Spidograms
Portfolio Assessment	Examples of work at different stages of development Copies Project work Work samples Concept/mind mapping
Conferencing	Pupil's work and progress can be the subject of meetings between: the child and his/her teacher the teacher and parents teacher and teacher all parties together
Peer and Self -Assessment	K.W.L. Chart (What I know, what I want to know, what I learned) Two stars and a wish Traffic lights Reflective comments / journal Smiley faces Find and Fix (Error Analysis)

	Think Pair Share Drafting and redrafting a piece of work Using Prompt Questions for Self-Assessment
Sharing the learning objective (WALT – We Are Learning To)	is what teachers expect most children will know, understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson or group of lessons
Developing and sharing the success criteria (WILF – What I Am Looking For)	Explain and generate the success criteria for the planned task.
Effective Feedback	Oral Feedback Written Feedback

7. Use of Standardised Testing

We are cognisant of the value of standardised testing in order to establish pupil attainment in Mathematics and English.

Standardised testing allows us:

- To compare pupils' achievements with national norms
- To monitor pupils' performance in Mathematics and English
- To identify strengths and weaknesses in the whole school approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy
- To inform teaching strategies in literacy and numeracy
- To alert teachers to pupils' difficulties in either literacy or numeracy
- To provide a nationally agreed method of reporting to parents of their pupils' progress in the areas of literacy and numeracy

8. Implementation of Standardised Testing

- The school administers standardised tests in both English and Mathematics in May each year.
- The MIST is administered to all pupils in Senior Infants in the second term.
- The Drumcondra Reading Test and Sigma - T tests are administered to all class groups from 1st – 6th class.
- The results of standardised tests are used to inform parents of pupils' progress and to assist in the identification of pupils that may require support. Results of standardised tests are communicated to parents in written format in the annual school report.
- Class teachers administer the tests in accordance with the guidelines given in the testing manuals. Exemption from standardised testing is considered when deemed necessary (circular 0138/2006).
- Raw Score, Standard Score, Percentile Rank, STen and Reading Age are recorded electronically and manually. The principal, SENCO, SET teachers, and classroom teachers are involved in the analysis of standardised results for an individual pupil, class and at whole school level.

- The school offers special education teaching to pupils in accordance with our Special Education policy.

9. Assessment at School Support and School Support Plus Level

An early screening process is in place in Ennis National School. This process can lead to early intervention strategies being put in place. Early intervention is of great importance at Ennis National School. Screening can take the form of whole-class screening or individual pupil screening (in the form of a diagnostic assessment).

(i) The following **Screening Tests** are in use in Ennis National School:

MIST	Senior Infants
Screening for Reading Recovery	Senior Infants and 1 st Class Pupils aged between 5:09 – 6:06

(ii) Other **Diagnostic Tests** available in the school are:

<p>Intelligence New N.R.I.T. N.V.R.T. CAT-4</p>
<p>Literacy YARC (York Assessment for Reading and Comprehension N.A.R.A. (Neale Analysis of Reading Ability) DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) WIAT-II (Wechsler Individual Achievement Test) SWST (Single Word Spelling Test) B.A.S. Spelling Test PM Benchmarking Assessment Test 2 R Dyslexia Screening Assessment Dyslexia Screener (GL Assessment) CHIPPS Phonics Test STAR Reading Tests (Accelerated Reader)</p>
<p>Maths MaLT Mathletics Assessment Dyscalculia Screener (GL Assessment)</p>
<p>Speech and Language B.P.V.S. (British Picture Vocabulary Scale)</p>

Renfrew Action Picture Test Renfrew Word Finding Test PSAK: EAL Assessment Tests
Irlen Screening We are in regular contact with a former staff member who is trained to screen pupils who we suspect may present with Irlen Syndrome. This teacher carries out these assessments on request.

The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by circulars 02/05, 13/17 and the NEPS Continuum of Support where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers and SET teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing/psychological assessment. Parents are provided with test results and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed. The Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening. From these results an individualised education plan will be devised. In consultation with parents the results of the diagnostic assessment may be made available to educational psychologists/other education professionals if further assessment is required.

10. Enlisting the support of outside agencies

In Ennis National School, the criteria used in the selection of pupils for school support is greatest need (see SEN Policy). The class teacher, relevant support teachers and the SENCO will discuss the results of interventions in place, diagnostic testing, screening and informal testing. The staff members involved will adhere to and follow the guidelines provided in the Continuum of Support. Following discussion, the staff members will decide whether intervention from a psychologist is required. If deemed appropriate, the relevant staff members will discuss the case with the NEPS psychologist assigned to the school.

Parents will be contacted for permission to secure a psychological assessment for their child. Class teacher/principal will arrange a consultation with specialised professionals to organise an assessment. The outcomes of the assessment will inform an individual educational plan for the child and this plan will incorporate recommendations made by the psychologist or other specialised professional(s). The reports are stored in the individual pupil's files in a central location.

A Psychological Assessment may be conducted by the following organisations:

- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Early Intervention Team
- HSE Assessment of Need Team
- HSE School Age Team
- Child and Adult Mental Health Services for Children

- Private psychological assessment e.g. Dyslexia Association of Ireland, private practitioner

If the class teacher has concerns regarding a child, the class teacher will refer the child to the SET teacher(s) in consultation with parents/guardians for diagnostic testing, after the staged Continuum of Support approach has been implemented. Results are communicated at parent-teacher meetings or at a specific meeting if required

11. Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK) is administered to children who present with EAL.

12. More-Able Children

Screening for giftedness occurs from 1st class. Our school's standardised tests are used to identify these pupils in conjunction with teacher observation and performance on class tests.

Assessment at classroom support level, school support level and school support plus level will lead to a review of targets in an individual's school support plans by the SET teachers, in consultation with class teacher and parents.

13. Recording Results of Standardised and Diagnostic Assessments

- Standardised assessment results are recorded manually and electronically on Aladdin.
- Diagnostic assessment results are recorded manually and stored in the pupil's file.
- Tests administered to infant classes are recorded manually.
- Test response booklets are stored in a central, secure location
- Results of whole school standardised testing are recorded on the annual Report Card and/or this information is given to parents.
- Sensitive data is stored in files and access is restricted. A copy of reports from professionals is stored in the school in the SEN filing cabinet.

14. Maintenance of Records

Each pupil's test results are reported in writing to parents on the annual report card in June each year. The results of standardised tests are maintained carefully by the school and are available for inspection by D.E.S. officials. These records are stored securely under the direction of the school principal.

15. Success Criteria of the Policy

This policy will be successful when:

- All of the staff are familiar with and implement the procedures outlined.
- All of the staff understand and recognise their responsibilities and carry out an assessment of pupil's work on a continuous basis.
- The transfer of assessment data between teachers is systematic and efficient.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

The principal, deputy principal, SEN coordinator, class teachers and special education teachers will have responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

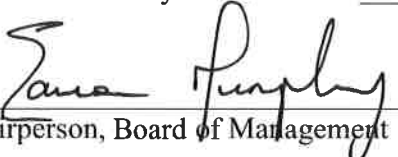
17. Implementation & Review

The policy will be first implemented in the academic year 2021/22 and the review date will be May 2023.

1. Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the B.O.M on 6th Dec 2021

Signed:


Chairperson, Board of Management