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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin
Galway and Roscommon
Education and Training Board

Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS - a Steiner education



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Assessment Policy

Assessment is clear seeing, rich understanding and respectful application.

1 INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

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 [Assessment Standardised Testing](#) as well as Circular 0138/2006.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Assessment is implicit in both the Steiner Waldorf and Primary School Curriculum approach. Good practice occurs when the self-reflective teacher assesses his or her own teaching and its outcome with individual children and shares this with colleagues on a regular basis. This insight should feed directly back into the classroom. In line with the Irish School Curriculum the Steiner Waldorf approach sees assessment as a means of gaining knowledge of, insight into and understanding for the child. The more accurate and comprehensive the observations, the richer the understanding. Increased understanding can lead to positive development in the child. In ideal circumstances, the outcome of assessment of a child is that meaningful help is offered, and new developmental opportunities are created. Assessment can lead to transformation in teaching and learning.

The core of the policy is that assessment at Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS should consider the whole, individual child and the class. It should motivate pupils and enable and encourage them to achieve to the best of their ability thus enabling all children to achieve success. This policy endeavours to assist the teaching staff to respond to the needs and abilities of all children, to inform their teaching, to identify strengths and to build on them, and to assess the class as a group cognitively, socially and emotionally. Our school believes that an effective assessment policy is central to this core objective. It is also important that it is accessible to parents /guardians and involves them in the process.

2 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 co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis.

3 PURPOSES 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
- To facilitate the active involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work

4 DEFINITION OF ASSESSMENT

In line with the NCCA, our staff believe that 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. We concur with their definition of classroom assessment as **"the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes."** Assessment, therefore, involves much more than testing. It is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the child that include moment-by-moment conversations, observations and actions. (NCCA, *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools*. November 2007 p.7).

"Whether the teacher is questioning and listening to children, observing children working on a task, or using the results of a weekly test to inform teaching and learning, assessment involves many overlapping and often simultaneous activities - gathering, recording, interpreting, using, and reporting information. These activities can happen within a few seconds or, in contrast, over a period of days or weeks depending on the purpose of the assessment and the methods used. The information gathered enriches the teacher's understanding both of what and how the child learns. The teacher uses that information to plan learning experiences based on appropriate objectives from the curriculum, and on the child's previous learning: Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the child and plans future work accordingly (Primary School Curriculum, Introduction, p. 17). Using assessment information in these ways, the teacher supports and extends the child's learning" (NCCA, *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools*. November 2007 p.7).

5 ASSESSMENT METHODS

At its heart, assessment for learning is a way of informing and involving the learners themselves in the process of assessment.

The following methods of Assessment for Learning (AfL) are currently being used in this school.

5.1 TEACHER OBSERVATION

- Teacher-designed tasks and tests.
- Portfolios - teachers are expected to assemble portfolios of pupil work with a sample from each curriculum area per year. This portfolio will be retained for the duration of the child's education in the school.
- Success and Improvement Strategy /Quality marking by children; this involves looking at completed work done by the pupil usually at the end of a main lesson block. The teacher and pupil look at the work together and identify learning outcomes, where the pupil has done well, as well as areas for improvement. This is done in a manner which encourages the pupil to reflect critically on his/her own work. Children are gradually trained to identify their own successes and improvement needs, with control gradually handed over from the teacher to the child.
- Sharing the learning intention/objective and devising success criteria – i.e. telling children what they are going to engage in, practice and learn... and agreeing the criteria for judging to what extent the learning outcomes have been achieved
- Effective teacher questioning – teachers use higher order questioning and engage various strategies for turning recall-questions into effective 'formative' questions that provoke fruitful discussion.
- Individual oral feedback – to include enabling children identify the next steps in their learning.
- Quality marking by teacher – occasional pieces of work marked thoroughly focusing on pointing out success and improvement rather than to mark every error in existence. On occasion 'test' marking will be undertaken whereby all aspects of the work will be marked e.g. a story where comments are made with regards to spelling, grammar, punctuation, handwriting and the overall quality of the work
- Oral response of pupils

5.2 PUPIL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment is the means by which pupils take responsibility for their own learning. However, we need to train pupils to self-assess.

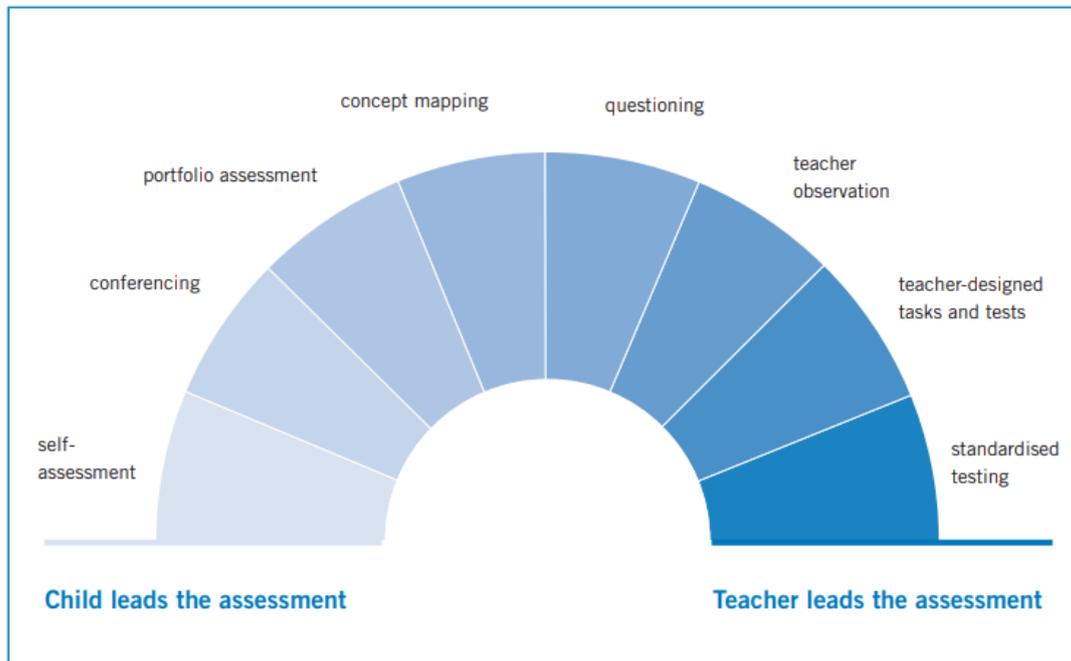
Strategies to aid self-assessment currently being used by the school include:

- KWL/KWHL charts (Know, Want to learn. Learned/Know, Want to learn, How to learn. Learned)
- Concept maps
- Self-Evaluation Questions
- Reflection; Representation; Reporting. Children think about what they have been learning. They then represent what they have learned (by: drawing, concept map, brainstorm, questions, map, paragraph. artefact etc.) Children then report on their learning – to teacher, class, group, parent, partner etc.

5.3 OTHER APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT:

- Completed assignments by pupils – projects, copybooks, activities, work samples, homework
- Parental, pupil feedback or observation
- Standardised tests
- Diagnostic tests
- Assessment by psychologist

Figure 2: A continuum of assessment methods



5.4 STANDARDISED TESTS

Standardised tests are generally seen as assessments of learning (AoL) and we use these to measure a child's Reading and Mathematical skills, and to determine children's progress in those areas. Information from the tests is important given the vital role of literacy and numeracy in enabling children to access the full curriculum.

AoL information is generally communicated to parents through parent/teacher meetings and report cards. Teachers can interpret assessment information for parents, highlighting how it can be used to improve the child's learning, and parents can respond to the outcomes of an assessment.

NCCA describes in their booklet *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools*, eight assessment methods which teachers use to gather evidence about children's progress in learning and to inform the next steps. Standardised testing is one of these methods. The administration of standardised tests to whole classes is inappropriate in infant classes. The whole class administration of a test may be confusing and upsetting for young children at this early stage of development given the attention capacity needed to complete a test booklet.

- Literacy will be tested every year using Micra-T from second class in May.
- Mathematics will be tested using Sigma T assessments every year from second class in May.
- The special education teacher is responsible for the purchase and distribution of test booklets.
- Class teachers are responsible for the administration, correction and communication of standardised tests.
- Class teachers are responsible for the results of the standardised testing of their students being stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office.

- Sigma T will be read to children with literacy difficulties i.e. dyslexia.
- Children who are not taking the test due to special educational needs will be catered for by the learning support teacher.
- The sten result will be recorded and communicated in a way which is meaningful to parents at parent teacher meetings.
- The special education teacher, class teacher and principal will be involved in the analysis of results for individual classes and at whole school level. This analysis will take place in June of the school year and will inform learning support and curricular planning for the following academic year.
- Screening: (Refer to Learning Support Guidelines and Circular 02/05)
- The Belfield Infant Assessment Test (testing memory, learning styles, social skills, motor skills, age 4-7) will be used on selected children in Infants classes to assess/ screen children of concern to teaching staff.
- The *Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)* and *Forward Together Programme* focus on reading, writing and listening skills and together provide a comprehensive screening, diagnostic and recovery package for younger children will be used by class teacher/SET– for whole class at the end of the second term in First class to screen for early literacy difficulties.
- Class teacher, special education teacher, and principal inform themselves on an on-going basis regarding contemporary screening and diagnostic test material in order to decide on useful and relevant approaches – depending on their class or specific children’s needs for assessment.

5.5 DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT: DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

A range of diagnostic tests are being used in the school in the first few years.

- Children are selected for diagnostic testing based on screening test results and/or consultations between class teacher, special education teacher and parents. Parental consent will be obtained through a standard consent form. Diagnostic tests are administered and interpreted by the special education teacher.
- Subsequent a support plan or IEPs will be informed by results of diagnostic tests. Parents and class teachers will meet with the special education teacher to discuss individual pupil plans.
- Pupils will be selected for supplementary teaching based on the needs within the school as a whole and thus on support guidelines in the school’s Special Education Policy.
- If a psychological assessment is deemed necessary, consultation between the class teacher and the parents will be the first step. After obtaining parental consent National Educational Psychological Service assessments will be organised by the special education teacher in consultation with the principal, parents and class teacher.
- Psychological reports are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office.

5.6 RECORDING THE RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT

- Assessment results and psychological reports are to be stored in the child’s file in the office. These include records of parent/ teacher meetings, standardised test results and copies of end of year reports.
- Assessment information will be stored on the school premises until after the child turns twenty-one.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

Class Teacher:	Responsible for the administration, correction and recording of assessment for their own class and for the administration of Standardised Tests. Class teachers are responsible for communicating results to the Special Education Teacher if support is needed. Scores on standardised tests will be analysed and discussed on a whole school basis.
Special Education Teacher:	Responsible for the administration, correction and recording of diagnostic /standardised tests (as agreed with class teacher) and for the dissemination of the test results to class teachers, parents and principal.
Principal:	Overall responsibility

7 SUCCESS CRITERIA

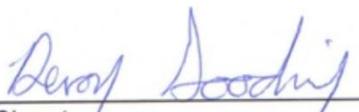
The success of this plan will be evaluated through teacher's planning and preparation, and if the procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed. We will also judge its success if the children have been enabled to achieve the aims outlined in this plan.

8 RATIFICATION

Cuan na Gaillimhe - CNS believes that the school community must be involved to successfully implement the Assessment Policy. Therefore, the teaching staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, Parents and the Local Community.

This school plan was worked on and discussed by staff during 2020 School Closure and presented to the Board of Management of Cuan na Gaillimhe –CNS on 27th April 2020.

Chairperson of the Board of Management



As a growing school this plan will be reviewed as necessary and in line with Assessment guidelines.