

# **St Finbarr's Boys' National School**

## **POLICY ON ASSESSMENT**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy was reviewed and redrafted in May 2014.

### **2. POLICY RATIONALE**

The core of the policy is that all children should experience a positive educational experience 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.

### **3. RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL ETHOS**

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child, the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment policy identifies early and ongoing interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

### **4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are to –

- (i) To facilitate improved pupil learning
- (ii) To create a procedure for monitoring effort, achievement and progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- (iii) To track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers.
- (iv) To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.

### **5. POLICY CONTENT**

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils including the exceptionally gifted, the children with special needs and other pupils who struggle to cope with the mainstream curriculum, so that adequate strategies are in place early enough to facilitate remediation. These strategies may include pupil self-assessment, pupil profiling, two-way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programmes and individual pupil programmes. Our current assessment procedures are outlined in attached documents. (Appendix 1)

#### **a. Purposes of Assessment:**

- To inform planning for and coverage of 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 contribute to the school's strategy for prevention of learning difficulties.
- To monitor pupils progress and attainment.
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes 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 involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work.

**b. Assessment for Learning**

- Informal assessment methods used in our school are –
  - Teacher observation
  - Teacher-designed tasks and tests
  - Work samples, portfolios and projects
- These assessment methods vary depending on age level and subject area.
- However, professional teacher observation applies across the whole school. Teacher designed tasks and tests are at the discretion of individual teachers.
- General guidelines apply to what is observed/recorded where assessment is based on teacher observation e.g.(checklists, mastery records, profiles and the need to be factual and non-judgemental
- Teachers assemble portfolios of pupil assignments, work samples in some subjects.
- The school's plan addresses the issue of assessment across all curricular subjects
- Teacher designed tasks/tests are used in Maths, History and Geography.
- Pupils are involved in assessment of their own work/progress through immediate feedback, questioning and response to finished assignments.

**6. STANDARDISED TESTS**

All classes from 2<sup>nd</sup> Class to 6<sup>th</sup> classes are tested. The tests are administered in the month of May by the class teacher. There is a uniform approach throughout the school regarding the date, time and method administration. Tests are corrected by the class teacher. The completed test booklet is stored in the pupil's individual file. Raw, Standard, Percentile and STen scores are recorded on the class record template. This is forwarded to the

next class on a yearly basis. Results are stored in the SEN co-ordinator's files. Each teacher keeps a copy of his/her own class results in the class files. Pupils who are absent on the day will do the test in an LSRT room at a later date and while test conditions will be maintained to the utmost classroom level, there will be an asterisk marked on the class record to indicate this. Pupils with either a language or a learning disability who, in the professional opinion of the class teacher, in collaboration with the Principal and who may not be able to participate usefully in the test at that time will be exempt from the test. Pupils who are exempt will be listed accordingly on the class record sheet which will be signed and dated by class teacher and Principal. The aggregate results of standardised testing of pupils in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes will be submitted to the department annually in accordance with Circular 56/2011.

The results of standardised tests will enable teachers to devise appropriate teaching plans for their pupils along with analysing whole school results with a view to planning for School Improvement Plan.

The SEN co-ordinator is responsible for purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing.

The LSRT analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September. The STen scores are communicated to parents at Parent/Teacher meetings and in the end of year report. An information leaflet explaining the scores is enclosed with the report of all new pupils.

The Standardised Tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses are:

- Dromcondra Reading Test
- Dromcondra Mathematics Test

## **7. SCREENING**

In order to contextualise the results obtained from standardised testing, screening tests are administered at the beginning of October in 2<sup>nd</sup> class each year. The results of the screening tests that we use provide us with a non specialised quotient of cognitive ability.

The tests we use are:

Non-Verbal Reasoning Test (NVRT)  
Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)

## **8. DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT**

The school policy on Special Needs lists all diagnostic used by the school:

- Aston Index
- Diagnostic Reading Analysis
- Neale Analysis
- Bangor Dyslexia

Such tests are administered by the Learning Support and Resource Teachers following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by Circular 02/05 where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing/psychological assessment.

#### **9. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

If after stages 1 and 2 further intervention is required, the class teacher consults with the Principal and SEN co-ordinator to discuss the next stage which may include a psychological assessment. the class teacher consults with the parents to secure their permission for the assessment. An assessment will determine the nature of the subsequent level of intervention, be it Learning Support Resource hours or an Individual Profile and Learning Plan.

#### **10. RECORDING**

Each pupil has a file which is stored in a secure filing cabinet in the classroom. This file records standardised test results, end of year reports and pupil profiles as well as pupils' test copies. This file is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progressed through the system. Procedures re management of sensitive data – see Action Plan)

#### **11. SUCCESS CRITERIA**

This policy is considered successful if –

- ✓ Early identification and intervention is achieved
- ✓ Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
- ✓ Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined
- ✓ The special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- ✓ There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

#### **12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Mainstream, Special Education teachers and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education team. The Principal and Special Needs Co-ordinator assume a primary role at Stage 3 when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open.

**13. IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy is effective from May 2014.

**14. RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St Finbarr's Boys' National School on May 12<sup>th</sup> 2014 and is available to parents for inspection.