

**St Michael’s NS**

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**ASSESSMENT POLICY**

**Introduction Statement.**

Assessment is viewed as essential to, and an integral part of effective teaching and learning. The purpose of assessment in St Michael’s National School is to gather, record, interpret, use and report information about the child’s progress and achievements in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. As a staff we will strive to ensure that assessment is

* Positive
* Manageable
* Useful
* Consistent

The policy was formulated in April 2016 through a collaborative process involving all staff members and in consultation with the School’s NEPS Psychologist. It was presented to the Board of Management for ratification in April 2016. It was reviewed and ratified by the BOM in September 2021.

**Rationale**

The fundamental core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. Success relative to their own unique potential and capabilities and irrespective of that of others. 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 (See- Support Policy for Special Needs Pupils). Similarly, this policy seeks to identify those who may be exceptionally capable academically (See policy to facilitate the Exceptionally Able Student) and to ensure adequate provision is made for these children.

The staff of St Michael’s National School believe that an effective assessment policy is central to the achievement of the core objective as indicated above. We therefore strive to ensure that assessment and recording is an integral part of the school’s performance management system. This in turn facilitates the formulation of a picture over time of a child’s progress and/or achievement in learning across the Primary School Curriculum. Assessment within St Michael’s N.S. is a unified approach, provided through a continuum of support which encompasses classroom support, whole school support and school plus support.

**Relationship to School Ethos:**

The school adopts a holistic approach to the provision of education. Staff acknowledges the significance of promoting the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and academic progress of each student and consequently identify with the need for continued enhancement in teaching processes. An effective assessment policy is therefore deemed fundamental and early interventions are identified as essential.

**Aims and Objectives of Assessment**

* 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 assist in the effective implementation of the Schools three year plan for Literacy and Numeracy.
* To coordinate and consolidate assessment procedures on a whole school basis,

**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 contribute to the school’s evaluation process.
  + 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

**Approaches to Assessment:**

A combination of informal and formal assessment approaches are used in

St Michaels’ N.S, these may include:

* Teacher observation
* Teacher designated tasks and tests
* Standardised Testing
* Student Self-Assessment

1. **Teacher Observation- Provision of Intensive Early Intervention**

Teachers engage in daily observation of pupils and this is used to guide and inform further planning on an individual and group basis. Forms of observation may include target child observation, a shadow study or anecdotal observations. Individual teachers may record observations to build a profile on the child, which may then be used to inform parents / external organisations about a particular child. Teachers will refer to the continuum of support and avail of documents such as the developmental/ basic needs checklist where appropriate.

Early intervention is a vital component of the learning support provision in our school. Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class teacher and/or by the special education needs teacher. Close collaboration and consultation between the class teachers and the special education needs teacher will help to identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention.

Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration and respect in the selection of pupils for early intervention. Language ability, displayed within the classroom environment through a combination of play, oral discussion etc. will be the key assessment tool used at this stage. Programmes for infants include the Early at Risk Indicators (teacher as observer) and the Middle Infant Screening/Forward Together Programmes and take due note of the following factors:

* Specific time frame (instructional term of 13 – 20 weeks)
* Small group/individual instruction.
* Strong focus on oral language development – laying of foundation for meaningful reading activities and development of comprehension skills
* Development of phonological awareness and a range of identification skills
* Engage pupils in frequent supervised oral/silent reading of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty and monitor their comprehension of these
* Develop listening, speaking, reading and writing
* Focus on language development in mathematics
* Development of mathematical procedures and concepts

**Additional interventions (at the discretion of the teacher):**

* Team Teaching for English and/or maths.
* Small group tuition focusing on development of speaking, listening, reading and writing
* Phonological awareness development
* Aistear
* Teacher/ Special Education Needs Teacher may use the basic needs/ developmental checklist for children they are concerned about.

1. **Teacher Designed Tests and Tasks**

Teacher designed tasks may take the form of written, oral or practical assignments and are used by the teacher to assess levels of understanding or misunderstanding. Feedback will always be provided by teachers after completion of assessment. Reporting of teacher designed tests/ tasks at parent teacher meetings are at the discretion of the individual teacher. Differentiation may also be incorporated into teacher designed tasks.

Homework is given to all pupils and is deemed as an effective and informative assessment tool in determining levels of understanding by pupils. Parents are encouraged to positively promote the benefits of homework in terms of reinforcing classroom learning. Teachers will make every effort to correct homework daily, however it is at the discretion of the class teacher how this process is undertaken.

Pupils preparing for secondary school/ entrance exams may be required to do additional homework / tasks, which the teacher deems appropriate to ensure adequate preparation has been reached.

1. **Standardised tests**

The school will use the Drumcondra Primary Reading Test and the Drumcondra Primary Maths tests from 1st class upwards. The tests will be administered at the end of May / start of June during a testing week. Parents will be notified in advance and encouraged to ensure that their children are present at school, well rested etc. on that particular week. The Special education needs teacher will assist in carrying out testing and will correct and record all. All results will be recorded on a central system (using the school’s Aladdin programme).

Each class teacher will keep a copy of their scores, as will the special education needs teacher. Sten and/or percentile scores will be reported home to parents in the summer school report along with an explanatory note explaining these scores. The special education needs teacher will use these results to assist in the formulation of a list of pupils who will require additional teaching support for the coming September. Keeping in line with departmental guidelines, priority will be given to children who fall below the 12 percentile in both Literacy and Numeracy. However, in line with the revised allocation process for special education teachers 2017/2018, the level and nature of support provided to individual students, will reflect the specific needs of the pupil and the highest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support.

Written consent will be sought by parents/ guardians prior to the provision of special educational needs teaching in either Literacy or Numeracy. If a parent decides to decline acceptance, on behalf of their child, they must provide a letter to the school confirming this. This letter will be kept for school records. Similarly if a parent decides to allow their child to cease attending special educational needs teaching, written confirmation of this will be requested.

The Drumcondra Early Numeracy assessment will be used in Senior Infants. This will be administered in January/ February by the special educational need teacher.

**Recording the Results of Standardised Assessment**

Standardised test results will be recorded electronically using the Aladdin School system and a printed copy of each class’s results will be given to Principal, class teacher and the special educational needs teacher. The class teacher will keep these results in the pupil enrolment folders.

**Screening**

Preliminary screening: To assist in the formation of individual student profile information may be obtained through the following means.

* Enrolment Forms – gathering of relevant information from parents about the child prior to coming to school (this may include other reports from outside agencies)
* Teacher designated tasks and tests
* Assessment may be carried out in Mathematics at the end of each topic / term or alternatively at the teachers discretion (mathematic assessments)
* Class Teacher recorded observations

Screening Tests: Used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses within the school. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per Circular 24/03 and Circular 02/05.

* NRIT will be administered to students in 1st, 3rd and 5th class, in November on an annual basis. The special educational needs teacher will be responsible for administering, correcting and recording results. Consultation will then take place between the special educational needs teacher and the class teacher, with regard to each individual pupil’s progress.
* MIST will be administered to Senior Infants in Jan/ Feb. This will be administered by the special educational needs teacher. It will provide the basis for identifying children in Senior Infants who may require additional support for the coming school year or if schools circumstances allow a short (4 week) intervention programme may be put in place for these students in June.
* The special education needs teacher may administer the NARA to all/some pupils who have been allocated support. This will be administered in Sep and again in June to allow for formulation of comparison and identification of progress / weaknesses.
* The classroom teacher and special educational needs teacher will share responsibility for administering standardised tests. The special educational needs teacher will correct and record results. This will take place during a designated testing week.

**Diagnostic Assessment:**

If deemed appropriate, the special educational needs teacher may decide to administer diagnostic assessment on a pupil. Diagnostic Assessments will be carried out subject to parental agreement, by the special educational needs teacher and consultation regarding the results will be held with the class teachers and parents. The special educational needs teacher, class teacher and parents will agree on the most appropriate form of intervention for the pupil.

The administration of such diagnostic testing is in keeping with the approach recommended by circular 02/05 which emphasises a staged approach on behalf of the class teacher prior to diagnostic testing / psychological assessment. Results of all testing will be disclosed to parents and consent will be sought in written form prior to assessment. Diagnostic assessment available within the school from September 2016 will include NARA, Dyslexia Screening Test, PhAB.

**Psychological Assessment:**

The school will formally request a consultation, and where appropriate, an assessment from a specialist outside the school in respect of children with learning difficulties and mild/moderate behavioural problems who have failed to make progress after supplementary teaching or behavioural programmes and of children with serious emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc.

In consultation with the relevant specialists the special educational needs teacher and class teacher will then draw up a learning plan, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan. The parents will be fully consulted throughout this process. This plan will be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary.

If it is considered that a psychological or other assessment (i.e. Speech & Language, Audiologist, other) is required this will be requested and arranged through consultation between parents / class teacher / special educational needs teacher and principal. The standard forms will be used.

A copy of all reports will be kept in Principal’s office in a locked cabinet.

1. **Student Self-Assessment**

Student self-assessment is used by teachers in accordance with the schools’ School Improvement Plan for Literacy. This involves the implementation of numerous strategies, at the discretion of the individual classroom teacher, to demonstrate understanding by children. Student self -assessment incorporates a more informal approach to assessment and actively encourages the involvement and participation of students in the assessment process. Forms of self- assessment may include the use of a rubric, evaluation sheet, KWL charts.

**Pupils transferring from Primary to Secondary School**

In keeping with departmental regulations, as per circular 0070/2014, all relevant student information included on both the student report card and the “My profile/ My Child’s Profile” forms, will be transferred on to the relevant secondary school. This will be done to ensure that an appropriate and honest picture of the child’s ability and achievement to date is made available to the new school and teachers, to promote continuity and progression for students during this time of transition and to highlight any pupils who may require additional learning support within the secondary school environment.

**Success Criteria**

* A range of informal and formal assessment modes 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 at the beginning/end of school year.

**Rules and Responsibilities**

This policy required the collaboration of staff members.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in October 2020.

**Signed: \_\_\_** John Doolan **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson)**

**Date:** 14/10/2020

**Appendix A- Guidelines for reporting standardised testing on school reports**

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| Well above average (Excellent) Sten 8- 10 |
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| High Average (Very Good) Sten 7 |
|  |
| Average (Good) Sten 5 / Sten 6 |
|  |
| Low Average (Fair) Sten 4 |
|  |
| Well below average \*Fair (& comment) Sten 1 / Sten 2 / Sten 3 |
|  |
| *(e.g. “working within own ability)* |

**Appendix B - Assessment using Standardised tests**

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| **Class** | **Test** | **Administration Date** |
|  | | |
| Senior Infants | Drumcondra Early Numeracy | January |
| Senior Infants | Middle Infant Screening Test - MIST | Feb |
| 1st – 6th | Drumcondra English | Middle/end of May  (Testing week) |
| 1st – 6th | Drumcondra Maths | Middle/end of May  (Testing week) |
| 1ST, 3RD, 5TH |  | November |
| **Communicating Results to Parents:**   * Results must be reported to Parents following 1st to 6th class assessments * Teachers will communicate NRIT results orally at parent teacher meetings. * Teachers will communicate Drumcondra through the annual school report. * Language and terminology will be explained (refer to box below) | | |

**Administering the test**

* When administering a standardised test, teachers must follow the instructions exactly as stipulated in the test’s manual in order to ensure that the results obtained are as accurate as possible.
* It is imperative that the tester does not help the children in any way other than those outlined in the instruction

**Appendix C- Interpreting scores for parents.**

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| --- | --- |
| **Name of score** | **What the score means** |
| **Raw score** | This is a simple count of the number of items for which the child has supplied correct answers. It is of little use in reporting on a child’s performance |
| **Standard score** | Standard scores are transformations of raw scores, and usually range between 55 and 145, with an average of 100 |
| **Percentile rank** | The percentile rank indicates the percentage of the relevant class or age group which has scored equal to or lower than this child’s scores. It does not mean the percentage of test items the child has answered correctly |
| **Sten score** | Sten scores are a ten point scale with 1 representing the lowest category and 10 the highest. These are derived from standard scores |

**Appendix D Diagnostic and Screening Assessment**

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| **To be administered by Special educational needs teacher** | | |
| **Area of Need** | **Test** | **Administration Date** |
| Literacy | Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NARA) | Reading age of 6 - 13 years. Beginning of Instructional term and annually thereafter |
| Dyslexia Screening Test | Where appropriate (e.g. notable difficulties with phonological processing, organisation, reading fluency or where a discrepancy emerges between NRIT Quotient and standardised reading scores (underperforming) |
|  |  |  |

*Advice will be sought from NEPs in relation to accessing further assessment tools if necessary.*

**Appendix E Informal Assessment**

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| **Area of Need** | **Assessment** |
| Literacy | Word Recognition – Dolch Word List |
| Running Record, Miscue Analysis |
| Jackson Phonics Assessment |
| Teacher Designed Test based on Jolly Phonics/Wonderland Programme (letter recognition of sounds and names, letter construction, recognising initial final and medial sounds in CVC words, blending sounds, spelling 3 and 4 phoneme words, tricky words) |
| Running Record Analysis |
| Social | Social Skills Checklist |
| Playground observation |
| Time and Interval Sampling |
| Motor | Teacher designed Test of fine motor skills |
| Behaviour | Playground observation |
| Time and Interval Sampling |
| Maths | Maths assessments from Maths programme in use. |
| Error Analysis (E.g. Based on Sigma T) |
| Checklist for Assessing Students Skills Development (NCCA Guidelines 2007) |

**Appendix F- Special Education Needs Teacher should follow the yearly plan**

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| **September/October** | 1. Engage in information gathering to assist with the I.E.P./I.P.L.P process:  * Administering informal/formal assessments * Reviews previous tests for diagnostic information e.g. Sigma T * Distribute parent/teacher pupil profile questionnaires * Meet with class teacher * Distribute pupil self-assessments and evaluations * Analysing reports from outside agencies  1. Document current level of performance 2. Identify strengths and learning needs. 3. Complete I.E.P./I.P.L.P formulation:  * Conduct I.E.P./I.P.L.P meeting (see above) * Identify learning targets for instructional period and methods and strategies for achieving these targets  1. Distribute copies of I.E.P./I.P.L.P to parents, and class teacher. |
| **November** | Complete NRIT in collaboration with class teachers (1st – 6th). Assist is administering, interpreting and recording results. |
| **January** | * Complete Drumcondra Early Numeracy in collaboration with class teacher in senior infants. |
| **February** | 1. Administer the MIST test to Senior Infants 2. Interpreting the scores. 3. Select children that would benefit from the Forward Together Programme and meet with relevant parents to explain how the programme should be implemented. 4. Conduct I.E.P./I.P.L.P Review Meetings with class teacher and relevant agencies (where possible) (See I.E.P./I.P.L.P section) and establish whether supplementary teaching should be continued, discontinued or whether the nature of instruction should be altered. 5. Where instruction is being continued, new learning targets should be set. |
| **April/May** | 1. Organise standardised test manuals and booklets and distribute to teachers. 2. Assist in the administration of standardised tests |
| **June** | 1. Input results of standardised tests (to the computer. 2. Store score sheets in the relevant assessment folders in the filing cabinet in the special education classroom. 3. Distribute copies of score sheets to the relevant class teachers and principal. 4. Analyse scores of standardised tests:    * Compare current scores with previous 2 years to evaluate the child’s progress (class tracking).    * Compare attainments in Literacy and Maths with NRIT quotient to determine whether or not the child’s is reaching his/her full potential which may highlight underperformance or a specific learning difficulty. 5. If deemed necessary, conduct I.P.L.P review meetings to establish whether supplementary teaching should be continued, discontinued or whether the nature of instruction should be altered. 6. If deemed necessary, conduct I.E.P. review meetings to discuss the child’s progress. 7. Identify children for supplementary teaching at each stage of the continuum of support for the coming year and devise a caseload list. |