

St Joseph's PS Slate Street



Assessment Policy

Rationale

Assessment in Saint Joseph's Primary School supports each pupil in the achievement of his or her full learning potential and fosters the development of self-esteem and personal responsibility. It takes place in a self-reflective context and encourages the involvement of all staff, pupils and parents.

Assessment is the process of obtaining, analysing and interpreting evidence for use by both pupils and teachers to enable the review, planning and improvement of learning. It is fully integrated with the delivery of the curriculum and is an essential component of effective classroom practice.

Aims of School Assessment Policy

In Saint Joseph's we aim to:

- Keep staff, parents and stakeholders informed of current procedures and statutory requirements
- Encourage positive achievement and personalised learning for pupils
- Improve standards of attainment for all pupils
- Benchmark, track and evaluate pupil progress in order to inform planning and ensure continual improvement
- Continue to develop a consistent framework which we can expand and enhance formative and summative assessment

Definition of Assessment

The aim of assessment is to show progress in learning, to ascertain to what extent pupils have achieved the skills, knowledge and understanding outlined in teachers' planning and to identify those who have learning difficulties in specific areas of the curriculum.

"Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how best to get them there."

Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles The Assessment Reform Group, 2002

In Saint Joseph's, Assessment for Learning is a part of our normal teaching routine. Assessment for Learning (AFL) places formative or continuous assessment at the heart of the learning and teaching cycle. The emphasis is on improvement, raising achievement in pupils' learning and celebrating success. AFL is conducted within day to day classroom practice in Saint Joseph's and takes place during learning. It also gives pupils an active role in the assessment process.

Assessment for Learning involves the following key actions

Our teachers begin lessons by making the Learning Intentions clear (what children will be learning) and clarifying Success Criteria (the recipe for success) with the children. This sharpens the thought process and helps inform the planning of responses so that children can give the best of themselves. Pupils' self-confidence is developed by encouraging them to evaluate their own work and make ongoing improvements. Peer and self-assessment is encouraged. In essence we strive to support children as they become independent learners and develop the confidence to take ownership of learning now and throughout their lives.

Assessment is about allowing children to demonstrate their progress and achievement. Assessment incorporates a variety of methods to make judgements about children's personal needs and achievements and thus show progress in learning. It helps identify areas where children could develop their skills and understanding. These informed judgements are integrated into the teaching and learning process and used to plan future action. Assessment is always ongoing and can be formal and informal in nature.

Positive assessment can help individual pupils improve their performance. Teachers can use the outcome of their assessment to inform future planning - to consolidate or extend learning and address areas of difficulty. The school can use assessment outcomes to set challenging and achievable targets for the ongoing improvement of the school. Test results are analysed for evidence that appropriate progress is being made by individual classes, year groups and key stages.

Indicators of Effective Assessment

"The teachers' assessment of the pupils' work can be considered effective when:

- Assessment is an integral part of planning, teaching and learning. Teachers use suitable forms of assessment based on expectations which are clear, realistic and understood by pupils.
- The pupils' written work is regularly and consistently marked in ways that highlight the strengths and shortcomings, using approaches that are well understood by pupils and their parents ;
- The level and nature of the pupils' prior attainments influence the selection and use of teaching methods and subject content; the pupils' strengths are consolidated and their weaknesses are addressed;
- The purpose of the homework is explained clearly; the work which is set appropriate to the needs of the pupils, reinforces and extends their knowledge and understanding and provides the teachers with evidence of progress."

Evaluating Schools DENI

Purpose of Assessment

To identify current achievement levels in children

To communicate findings to children

To allow children to identify ways of self improvement

To identify areas for improvement

To diagnose difficulties and strengths and specific learning needs

To inform teachers of how successful they have been in specific teaching methods and organisation in the delivery of the Curriculum and aid in future planning

To inform teaching and learning

To ensure continuity between year groups and key stages

To provide reports and records to pass on to subsequent teachers

To identify where additional support or assistance may be needed

To foster high self-esteem and ensure progress

To implement changes that can bring about better outcomes for pupils

To ensure continuity within year groups and between year groups

To inform Parent(s) / Guardian(s) of their children's progress

To set achievable targets for the improvement of the school

To track individual pupils

To comply with legislation

Assessment

There are four main forms of assessment in Saint Joseph's Primary School.

- **Formative** assessment so that positive achievements of pupils may be recognised, informs next steps and future learning planned
- **Diagnostic** assessment identifies strengths and areas for improvement and informs the next steps to be taken in planning and teaching our pupils
- **Summative** assessment acknowledges, records and reports overall achievement in a clear and systematic way
- **Evaluative** assessment provides information for monitoring and accountability - the data gathered about pupil achievement, is monitored and used by the school in the making of decisions regarding resources and curriculum planning

Assessment Arrangements in Saint Joseph's Primary School

Teachers' Planning

- Appropriate assessment methods are reflected in teachers' planning. Assessment tasks are varied in nature and reflect all the ability ranges there may be within each class. These are constantly being reviewed as the Northern Ireland Curriculum matures.

Class Tests

- **Class tests** are half-termly. Teachers may use methods such as planned and recorded observation, class activities, diagnostic tests, pupil self-assessment, peer assessment running records, spelling tests, dictations, differentiated written or oral tests.

Baseline Assessment

- Is carried out in Primary One between September and October. This consists of parent interviews plus an assessment by teacher(s). The parents also attend a workshop entitled - Journey with my Child.

- **Comet Resources**: Throughout Primary One and Primary Two pupils will be continually assessed using comet resources and these are also logged on to SIMS.
- **Numeracy Profiling**: This is a baseline assessment, which when used formatively enables the teachers to clearly identify the strengths and areas for development for each child. This information is also used to set targets for the children's learning of early mathematical ideas, thus providing a means to measure value added as the children progress through the school.
- **Mist**: Year two pupils will completed the Mist Test in September and then in May. Mist is group administered and identifies early literacy difficulties.

Nurture We have a fully equipped Nurture Unit which takes a selection of Year Two children. In term three we have a selection of pupils from Primary Seven who participate in the Bounce Back Programme. The purpose of the nurture room is to give support to small groups of children to help them overcome the challenges that were hindering them from accessing the curriculum or reaching their full potential. It provides a routine session, where there is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere. The child is identified and referred through a specific route, assessed through the gathering of information, A Boxall Profile consisting of two sections namely the development strand and diagnostic profile along with observations to identify strengths and need. The Nurture cycle involves assessment, referral, planning, nurture group intervention, monitor, review and resettlement. **Standardised tests**

- **PTE and PTM Progress in English and Progress in Maths (formally PIE and PIM):**

Pupils in Primary Two complete the PTM6 in May. Pupils from Primary Three to Primary Seven are tested every May by GL NFER standardised tests in numeracy and literacy. They produce a wealth of information about the achievements of each class and the information is broken down into component parts of both English and Maths to give the teacher an in-depth insight into the areas that need developed within the class.

Cognitive Ability Test - CAT4

This test helps pinpoint gifted and talented pupils and underachievers. The test supports schools in monitoring progress and setting targets for future attainment. Information about a pupil's reasoning ability will be key to many decisions and should be considered alongside attainment data and other factors known to impact

on learning, such as attendance and attitude. This is administered in Primary Three, Four and Primary Six and used to identify underachievement in literacy and numeracy. The percentage of whole school underachievement can be seen at a glance through sims assessment manager.

PASS

The Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) attitudinal survey offers a way for staff to gain an insight into any barriers that are preventing children from achieving their full potential and proactively intervene at an early stage. Students are asked a series of short questions designed to measure students' attitudes in nine core factors which have proven links with academic outcome. These include feelings in school, perceived learning capability, self-regard as a learner, preparedness for learning, attitudes to teachers, general work ethic, confidence in learning, attitude to attendance and response to curriculum demands, which can bring to light feelings of social exclusion or potential bullying. These results are available through sims. They are carried out at the start of the year and at the end of the year and are completed from Primary Three to Primary Seven.

Accelerated Reader

The Accelerated Reader Programme commenced in September 2017 and is completed by our children in Primary Four to Primary Seven. The Accelerated Reader gives teachers the information they need to monitor students' reading practice and make informed decisions to guide their future learning. Teachers can see how well students are performing at class, group and individual level. It brings together data from the Accelerated Reader and the Renaissance Star Reading assessment by giving teachers insight into how well students have responded and allows teachers to diagnose problems and inform intervention programmes.

Reading Partnership Programme

Is a ten week programme - 15 mins a day, 3 times a week following a common lesson structure. Trained classroom assistants / volunteers usually work with three children in the programme (from Primary Two to Primary Seven) and deliver an intense reading programme. Reading Partners work to provide one-to-one additional support for reading. Reading Partnership has a positive impact on three different measures of student reading proficiency – reading comprehension, fluency, and sight-word reading.

Accelerated Maths

Accelerated Maths helps children to practice the right skills at the appropriate time and pace, leading them towards mastery of the concepts they have been learning. Accelerated Maths provides a comprehensive set of reports that give a detailed picture of every child's understanding of the skills they need to acquire.

Maths Mastery

The Maths Mastery Programme is currently being implemented in our Year One and Year Two classes. It is hoped to be gradually introduced to each year group each year.

Maths mastery approach expose almost all of the children to the same curriculum content at the same pace, allowing them all full access to the curriculum by focusing on developing deep understanding and secure fluency with facts and procedures, and providing differentiation by offering rapid support and intervention to address each individual pupil's needs. An approach based on mastery principles:

Makes use of mathematical representations that expose the underlying structure of the mathematics;

Helps children to make sense of concepts and achieve fluency through carefully structured questions, exercises and problems that use conceptual and procedural variation to provide 'intelligent practice', which develops conceptual understanding and procedural fluency in parallel;

Blends whole class discussion and precise questioning with intelligent practice and, where necessary, individual support.

End of Key Stage Arrangements: There will be no statutory assessment or recording/ reporting of levels due to industrial action.

Assessments in Communications and Using Mathematics

(Children in Primary Four and Primary Seven classes participate in statutory assessment of Communication and Using Mathematics. The results of these assessments are posted to parent(s) / guardian(s) with the pupil's end of year report. Information on national averages will also be included. As part of the validation process the school submits samples of work each year to CCEA in term two.) This is currently under review.

Assessment in Using I.C.T

(Whilst all children carry out tasks using I.C.T children in Primary Four and Primary Seven produce samples of work in the Cross Curricular Skill Area of Using I.C.T for moderation and levelling. The tasks for these are found in the CCEA task library and are submitted to CCEA for moderation. This is statutory from 2013/2014.) This is currently under review.

Reporting to Parents

Parent/teacher interviews are held in the first term each year. These interviews usually last ten minutes. At this meeting parents will be informed of their child's progress. Parents receive a written report in term three of each year. Reports include information on their child's progress on all aspects of the NI Curriculum, attendance, behaviour, social skills and attitude. Primary Seven parent(s) / guardian(s) are invited for interview with the Principal in term two to discuss new secondary school arrangements for pupils.

C2k Assessment Manager

Use of C2k Assessment Manager on SIMS allows teachers and subject co-ordinators to monitor pupil achievement, track lines of progression and they are assisted in setting realistic targets for the coming year on an individual basis. As the module is integrated within the SIMS Software it has the ability to use additional SIMS data fields which provide further analysis such as breakdown of information for Special Educational Needs, Free School Meals, and Looked After Children etc.

These informative records are kept centrally in the school and these are monitored by the Principal and Assessment Co-ordinator and shared with teachers who can use the information for planning and for deciding on focus groups for withdrawal in terms of either Special Educational Needs or a booster groups to reinforce and consolidate work. The information shows a value added aspect to performance. The assessment system itself produces informed targets for each child based on their age and their last performances in the tests. A score which is plus or minus ten shows that the child is achieving within a range which is expected of them based on their level of progression. This information is shared when passing on class details. Similar material is shared with post primary schools at point of transfer.

The results from the baseline and comet tests used with Primary One and Primary Two children are also stored on Assessment Manager and the results are shown by way of a traffic light system. Green signifying that the child is achieving at a level which would be expected of a child at their age. Amber

signifies that the child requires some assistance in achieving the aims and red signifies that the child requires significant help.

SEN

Using information supplied by previous teacher(s) as well as on-going observation, the use of CATS, PTE and PTM, the class teacher will identify different ability groups within the class as well as pupils with special educational needs. Objective analysis of standardised scores will also play a major role in identifying pupils for additional support both inside and out of the classroom.

IEP

Such pupils with Special Educational Needs will have an Individual Education Plan co-written for them by the class teacher and special needs teacher three times a year. Each IEP will be reviewed and these children will be facilitated within the school's SEN timetable. Child friendly education plans are also developed to ensure that the pupil has a central and critical role in identifying targets which should be met. (Refer SEN policy)

Record Keeping

Assessment records should have a meaningful purpose indicating various achievements by the pupil as well as recognising legislative requirements. Teachers are encouraged to keep clear and concise records of children's progress.

Records of reports and samples of tests and class work should be kept each year in an individual file. These pupil profiles are passed on to each subsequent teacher as well as any other assessment records, which inform the new teacher. It is important, especially for pupils who are receiving additional support that teachers keep up to date the records on Assessment Manager to ensure that lines of progression identified for each child is accurate.

Children with Special Educational Needs

In order to help our children reach their full potential, we will ensure that all pupils with special educational needs are identified, appropriate provision made in accordance with the Code of Practice and the inclusive ethos of SENCO and that assessment is an integral part of their learning process.

For those children who have extreme difficulty accessing the curriculum despite the efforts of Special Needs support within the school and from

external agencies, full scale educational assessments will be carried out by the educational psychologist to inform future decisions about how best to meet the child's needs.

We recognise that there are many barriers to a child's learning including children with English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), looked after children (LAC) and children experiencing social and emotional difficulties. We appreciate that these barriers can be long term or short term and will be addressed accordingly.

Conditions of Learning

At Saint Joseph's we aim to create an ethos and environment in which pupils can enjoy learning, reflect, improve and grow in confidence which is fundamental to learning. The following conditions of learning promote assessment for learning in the classroom:

- A range of approaches are used in ensuring all children are actively engaged in creating a culture of collaborative learning;
- Learning objectives are explicitly shared with children and they know what they need to do to improve, and what the teacher is looking for;
- Children talk as part of their learning and about their learning;
- Resources promote children's involvement and shared learning;
- Opportunities for reflection and discussion will happen throughout the day and when appropriate, in the plenary of a lesson;
- Displays reflect the learning process as well as the content and the product of children's learning;
- Children will be supported in self and peer assessment

Involving Parents

In Saint Joseph's, we feel it is important to see parents as co-educators and encourage a two way flow of information between home and school in which parents' contributions are valued. Information will be shared through:

- Curriculum meetings
- Parent and teacher interviews

- Closely liaison with Parent Support Officer
- Parent workshops E.g. Journey With Your Child
- Guidance and advice to parents on how to regularly engage in positive discussions about learning with their children;
- Guidance on how to support children's learning at home, including:
- Weekly homework sheets with advice and helpful revision tips;
- Recommended websites to promote interactive learning and development of ICT skills
- Access to school website / newsletters / text message
- Advice sheets to help guide parents when reading with their children
- Homework packs Primary One - Primary Three
- Mental Maths Packs Primary Five - Primary Seven

Transfer of Information

Individual profiles are kept on all pupils as a measure of their work and achievement throughout the year. Profiles should be passed on each year as a means to inform planning and teaching and to ensure progression and continuity.

When the children leave Saint Joseph's at the end of primary seven, the school to which they are transferring will receive a copy of their Key Stage Two results in Literacy and Numeracy and any additional information deemed to be relevant.

Professional Development of Staff

In Saint Joseph's Primary School we are committed to ensuring that all staff members are informed and kept up to date with any current educational developments within assessment.

Policy Review

As part of the school's monitoring and evaluation process, we continually strive to adapt and improve our practice to meet our pupils' needs. Therefore the assessment co-ordinator should ensure that the policy reflects the ongoing practice within the school.

Adapted: March 2019

Review due 2021

