



St. Patrick's NS Strangsmills

Assessment policy

Revised: 2026

1. OVERVIEW

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and it has been given statutory obligation in Section 22 (2) (b) of the Education Act 1998 which requires schools to “regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents.” Thus in formulating this policy, St Patrick’s N.S. understands assessment to be “...the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child’s progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes”. (Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools NCCA).

2. DEVELOPMENT

The original policy was formulated in 2012 in response to the directive to review assessment policies as laid down in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. The policy was reviewed again in 2020 and this current review took place during the 2025 - 2026 school year.

3. POLICY RATIONALE

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. The policy endeavour’s 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.

4. RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL ETHOS

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

5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are to:

- facilitate improved pupil learning

- create a procedure for monitoring achievement
- Identify areas of concern
- track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
- co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.

6. PRINCIPLES

1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment is to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.
3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organisation, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
5. We recognise the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.
6. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.
7. Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful and manageable.

7. POLICY CONTENT

This policy is aimed towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils 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 Support Plans (see also SEN Policy).

8. ASSESSMENT METHODS

How is learning assessed?

As part of the assessment process, a selection of assessment tools, chosen at the discretion of the teacher, will be used to help gain a clearer picture of the success of the teaching and learning in our school. Apart from the specific tests named below, a variety of assessment methods is used throughout the school, depending on the age of the pupils and the specific curricular area. In general, the assessment methods used in this school are:

- Pupil self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Teacher observation
- Teacher questioning
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Pupil projects and portfolios
- Samples of pupils' work
- Class tests
- Annual reports
- Checklists
- NCSE Audits
- Sharing learning intentions and devising success criteria (WALT/WILF)
- Success and improvement strategies (2 stars and a wish, WWW EBI)

Main areas to be addressed in this policy

1. **Assessment for Learning**
2. **Assessment of Learning**
3. **Self-assessment by students and teachers**
4. **Screening/Diagnostic assessment**
5. **Standardised assessment**
6. **Educational Psychological assessment**

9. ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (AFL)

Assessment for Learning emphasises the child's active role in his/her own learning. This level of involvement, in shaping their own learning, can heighten children's awareness of themselves as learners and encourage them to take more personal responsibility for, and pride in, their learning. By interacting with the children in such a way, the teacher can gain invaluable information as to how best to deliver the curriculum in their classroom. Every interaction has the potential to provide the teacher and children with a better idea of what they do or don't understand or can and can't do. Many of these interactions are informal and are a continuous part of everyday classroom activities, in all classes, across the full curriculum. They are used to identify what pupils have achieved, what might be affecting their progress and what strategies will best support their future learning. The information that such assessment provides will also enable teachers to evaluate their own practice and make changes.

Assessment for Learning may consist of, among others, the following:

- a) Teachers observing the child in the classroom and whole school environment, through listening, observations, reflections, and reactions to classroom problems, so that a picture of the child can be built up. Various checklists can be compiled e.g. vocabulary, behaviour, skills, samples of pupils' work (e.g. writing, art) etc. An important part of recording the progress of the child is the periodic recording of strengths and weaknesses of the child.
- b) Effective teacher questioning – use higher order questions to provoke fruitful discussion, turn recall questions in formative questions e.g. give me a range of answers, give a statement and ask a child to agree/disagree and give reasons, ask how an answer was arrived at, ask an opposing standpoint question, challenge traditional thinking etc.
- c) Class work
- d) Journals e.g. maths journal
- e) Homework
- f) Pupil – teacher discussion/conferencing
- g) Projects in the Senior classes

- h) Teacher designed assessments
- i) Rubrics (e.g. English SIP)
- j) Peer assessment (e.g. from 'Move well, Move often')

10. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING (AOL)

Assessment of Learning 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. Assessment of Learning is more about measuring a child's cumulative progress towards objectives, often in the form of a grade or score. Samples of pupil's work such as English writing samples are used to assess progress at the end of a term and to monitor progress from year to year. Assessment of Learning also helps the teacher to plan future work, to set new targets, and to provide feedback and information for end-of-year assessment.

11. SELF-ASSESSMENT BY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Children are involved in self-assessment when they look at their own work in a reflective way, identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved, and then set personal learning targets for themselves. Self-assessment skills include effective questioning, reflection, problem solving, comparative analysis, and the ability to share thoughts in a variety of ways. Self-assessment can be used by children of all ability levels and in all areas of learning. In age-appropriate ways, it can be used throughout the primary school and across all subjects. Whole class discussions, group situations or one-to-one conferencing are all platforms for self-assessment. These everyday activities place assessments at the very heart of teaching and learning. It enables the child to take greater responsibility for his/her own learning. A learning log/journal can be used to document the child's self-assessment and reflection on his/her work samples or collections.

Teachers in turn, can also use self-assessment to evaluate how they deliver the curriculum content to the children and by reflecting on how a unit of work was delivered. This reflective practice, coupled with the AfL and AoL mentioned earlier, will help to inform them as to what was successful and if any adjustments may improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

We will use a variety of ways of involving pupils in assessing their own learning, these may include:

1. Questioning
2. Feedback-individual and/or group feedback
3. Dialogue and Discussion
4. Focused Correction of Work
5. Visual Aids
6. Journals e.g maths journal
7. Traffic Light System
8. KWL grid – This can be used orally and/or written, by group and/or class and/or individual
9. Two stars and a wish / EBI – even better if
10. Smiley Face System
11. Thumbs up / Thumbs down
12. WALT (we are learning to) / WILF (what I am looking for)
13. Move well, Move often checklists for self-assessment

12. PREVENTATIVE AND SUPPLEMENTARY TEACHING

There is an emphasis in our school on preventative teaching approaches in Literacy and Numeracy from the Infant classes upwards. If a child begins to show signs of difficulty or a discrepancy becomes apparent between the chronological age of the child and their level of attainment, the Class Teacher will use classroom assessments, devise targets for improvement and the child will be supported within the classroom. A classroom support plan will be opened at this stage and parents informed. If concerns continue following interventions at classroom level, the SET will undertake further testing in order to establish the nature of any difficulty and to determine if the child needs to be moved to school support. If at this point the child is moving to School Support parents/guardians will be asked to sign a consent form allowing their child to receive the additional support. After this consultation with parents/guardians, the SEN teacher, in co-operation with the Classroom Teacher and Principal/SENCO, may administer additional screening/diagnostic checklists and/or tests in order to identify any underlying causes of learning difficulties

which are acting as obstacles to learning. By eliciting more precise information, it is possible to analyse the relative strengths and weaknesses of the child. Programmes can then be implemented based on the needs of the child, in order to give him/her specific help. If there is still cause for concern regarding the child, after a period intervention, this is referred to the SENCO/Principal and possibly placed on a priority list for educational psychological assessment.

In the case where a child is selected for supplementary teaching but the parents do not wish for the child to receive such support, a written letter from the parents will be sought outlining that while the school made them aware of the difficulty their child was experiencing and while supplementary teaching was made available, they have decided that they do not wish the child to avail of this support.

13. SCREENING/DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Junior Infants

All children in Junior Infants are screened in order to identify children experiencing difficulties in learning. Some or all of the following screening measures may be used

- Input from parents
- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Checklists
- PM benchmarking
- BIAP (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile) for specific pupils
- Alpaca (introduced on a trial basis in 2024/2025)

Senior Infants

The same assessment methods are used as in Junior Infants. The Test 2R is administered during the second term of Senior Infants to screen for literacy difficulties with specific children of concern and diagnostic tests will be used where concerns arise in the results of the Test2R. The aim is to identify pupils who have not the literacy skills in place or who are

showing confusion, and to allow intervention at an early stage. The Drumcondra early literacy and numeracy test are also administered at a whole class level.

First and Second Class

Assessment will continue as in the Infant classes, except that Standardised Testing begins in First Class in both English (reading and spelling) and Maths. Teacher testing, in areas such as Spelling, in both English and Irish, and Maths Tables will also commence. Standardised testing using the Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (DPRT) for literacy and the Drumcondra Test for numeracy will be administered during the third term, usually in the month of May. The Ballard Westwood test is also used at intervals across the year to monitor progress. The New Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT) will also be administered during second class to aid in the detection of language difficulties and specific learning difficulties.

Third and Fourth Class

Assessment will continue as per previous classes. The NVRT is administered in 3rd class, while the NNRIT will again be administered to specific pupils during fourth class to aid in the detection of language difficulties and specific learning difficulties. Results will be analysed in conjunction with the Standardised Test results.

Fifth and Sixth Class

Assessment will continue as per previous classes. The NVRT is administered in 5th class.

List of Screening/Diagnostic methods which may be used by our school:

- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)
- Test 2R
- Drumcondra Primary Reading Test
- Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test
- Drumcondra Spelling
- NNRIT
- NVRT

- Dyslexia Portfolio
- Dyscalculia Screening Test
- Alpaca test

Additional Assessments available to SET /Classroom Teachers in our school

- Dolch Word Assessments
- My thoughts about school
- Word Reading Age Assessments (BAS, Burt, Schonell)
- Yarc (Word Reading, Fluency and Comprehension)
- WRAT 5
- Two Peas Phonological Awareness Assessment
- Letter Assessments (names/sounds/formation)
- Phonics Assessments (CVCs/CHIPPS/Jackson Phonics)
- Spelling Assessments (Schonell/Drumcondra*)
- Maths (Ballard Westwood/Termly Tests from Maths Programmes)
- CTopp 2
- Towre 2
- Language and Communication Checklists
- Fundamental Moves Checklist (Move Often, Move well)
- Smart Moves Motor Skills Development
- Social Skills Checklist
- NEPS Checklists (General)
- NCSE 'Stressor' checklist and environmental audits for sensory needs
- PM Reading Assessment Resource (Benchmarking)

14. STANDARDISED ASSESSMENT

Standardised Assessments are conducted by class teachers during the months of May in accordance with circular 0056/2011. These take place at all class levels from 1st to 6th class.

The results of tests are scrutinised by the Class Teacher, the SET and Principal. Where results indicate a learning difficulty i.e. where there is a marked difference between the child's chronological and reading/mathematical age and/or whose classroom performance

signify some level of difficulty, the pupil is, with written parental approval, referred for diagnostic testing. If there is still cause for concern, the child may be given additional support from a Special Education Teacher. Following intervention for a length of time, if little progress has been made, the child may be referred to the SENCO/Principal and possibly placed on a priority list for educational psychological assessment.

In line with Circular 0056/2011 results are communicated to parents. These results are accompanied by a standard explanatory note from school. Under the circular, these results are also reported to the BOM. Results for Second, Fourth and Sixth Class are reported to the Department of Education and Skills in aggregated form. The STEN and/or Standard Score is communicated to parents. The parents of all children in the school, whose results give cause for concern, are phoned to discuss their child's progress and attainment with the class teacher.

The standardised test booklets are kept until the following year when the new test results are collated. Thereafter, only the results section will be stored. The records are stored in a secure filing cabinet. The results are also stored in electronic copy form on the Aladdin Student Management System. These records are kept until the child has reached twenty-five years of age.

15. EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

When a child is prioritised for an educational psychological assessment (assessing for dyslexia or dyscalculia etc), a meeting will be held with the parents to discuss this procedure. A school has access to a very limited number of assessments each year and may just have one or two assessments available. The SEN team in conjunction with the Principal/SENCO will organise the assessment with the NEPS psychologist. The assessment will inform the drafting of a SP/SSP for the child. The psychological reports can only be accessed by teachers on a need to know basis. These reports are stored securely in locked filing cabinets accessed by the SEN team and also stored as a soft copy on Aladdin under an individual child's file. Following an educational assessment, the NEPS psychologist may

recommend a referral to the GP, CDNT, Primary care or other professionals if a clinical assessment or other interventions/supports are deemed necessary.

16. RECORDING AND STORAGE OF ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- **How is assessment information recorded?**

Assessment information in this school is recorded through marks, grades, checklists and narrative comment, both oral and written. Comments are phrased in a positive manner and, if appropriate, with recommendations for improvement in specific areas of learning.

- **Where is assessment information stored?**

The results are stored in electronic copy form and these are kept on the Aladdin software system.

- **With whom is information shared?**

The Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 entitles the parents/guardians of all primary school children to have access to all personal data relating to their children, whether stored in electronic form or hard copy.

Where appropriate, the school also shares information with other teachers, other primary schools and secondary schools when children transfer, and the children themselves.

Assessment information on an individual child will be provided to another school, primary or post-primary, to which the child is transferring. This will only be done upon receipt of written enrolment confirmation. If a school requests our school to forward the educational psychological assessment, this request will be conveyed to the parent.

The school also shares information with other relevant individuals and agencies such as the Inspectorate of the Dept. of Education and Skills, NEPS psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENOs), Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) of Tusla and other professionals such as speech and language and occupational therapists. Where assessment information is shared, confidentiality is maintained between the school and the receiver of

the information. All requests from outside agencies for assessment information on individual pupils must be made through the Principal.

- **How is assessment information shared with parents/guardians?**

Assessment information is formally shared with parents twice a year.

Parent/teacher meetings take place once a year during the first term, usually in November. Each child's parents are invited to attend a ten minute meeting in person or by phone. If either the teacher or the parents believe that a follow-up meeting should take place, it will be arranged for a mutually convenient time.

A comprehensive written report is given to parents at the end of the school year. This report covers both academic and social progress. This report includes the results of the Standardised tests and a short explanation of the results.

Results of the Test 2R are shared with the parents of children whose results have given cause for concern.

Results of diagnostic tests are shared with the parents and teacher of the child concerned.

- **How are assessment results used?**

Assessment results are used to communicate a child's progress to his/her parents (Assessment of Learning).

Results are also used to enable teachers to plan lessons in a specific way, both for the class in general and to differentiate the learning experience for particular pupils (Assessment for Learning).

17. SUCCESS CRITERIA

We will know this policy has succeeded when:

1. A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning.
2. Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for the different aspects.

3. Transfer of information from teacher to teacher happens efficiently at the beginning and end of the school year.
4. Each child has been presented with the opportunity of assessment from the spectrum of assessment tools mentioned above.

18. IMPLEMENTATION DATE

While most of the elements of this policy have been in operation within the school for many years, this amended Assessment Policy will formally apply from March 2026.

19. TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW

This Policy is scheduled for review in the school year 2029/2030.

20. RATIFICATION

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on February 3rd 2026.

Chairperson's signature _____

Date: _____

Kieran Leahy