

# St. Joseph's National School 09927I

## Assessment Policy

### Introductory Statement

This Assessment Policy was originally drawn up in February 2012 in line with the recommendations of The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020, and Circulars 01/05 and 02/05. It was discussed on a whole school basis at three Croke Park meetings on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2012. It was updated and reviewed by staff, representatives of the Parent's Association and the Board of Management in May & June 2014, February and April 2016. This version of the policy was reviewed by staff, representatives of the Parent's Association and the Board of Management between October and December 2022.

### Rationale

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy endeavours to identify, at the earliest opportunity, children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a whole school response to their needs.

At St. Joseph's National School, we believe the key purpose of assessment is to move children on in their learning. It is of overriding importance that assessment at St. Joseph's N.S should motivate pupils and encourage them to achieve to the best of their ability. Continued monitoring of each child's progress gives a clear picture of what each child is doing. It is important that the teacher knows what has been remembered, what skills have been acquired, and what concepts have been understood. This enables teachers to reflect on what children are doing and informs future planning. The outcomes of our assessment will help children become involved in raising their own expectations. Such attainment needs to be compared with the child's previous work, but also against children in the cohort. Our assessments will also provide information for others including:

- Parents; to show progression / concerns, and involve them in the teaching process.
- Relevant outside agencies.
- SENO; to support SNA applications/reviews
- SET; for school support and school support plus plans

### Relationship to mission statement of the school

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. An effective Assessment Policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that each child reaches his/her potential and positive self-esteem is achieved.

## Aims

- To facilitate improved teaching and learning
- To target needs and strengths
- To create a procedure for monitoring progress and achievements
- To identify alternative teaching and learning initiatives and learning processes which assist the long-term and short-term planning of teachers
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole-school basis

## Forms of Assessment

Assessment can be described in the following terms:

- Formative: Helping the child in the process of learning.
- Evaluative: Helping the teacher to evaluate the learning opportunities provided. We can carefully plan activities taking into account the needs of the child so that their skills, knowledge and understanding are fully developed. Children will also be involved in assessing their own work.
- Summative: Providing information for reports and school records. We can then write a summary report based on evidence of what a child knows, understands and can do.
- Informative: This provides information for parents and for the child's next teacher. We can then communicate to parents and teachers how the child is performing.

## Purposes of assessment

To inform planning for, and coverage of, all areas of the curriculum.

- To identify the particular learning needs of all pupils.
- To contribute to the school's strategy for early intervention and prevention of learning difficulties.
- To monitor pupil 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.
- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies.

## Approaches to Assessment

### *Assessment for Learning (A.f.L.)*

- An ongoing process of recognising and responding to the pupil's
- learning in order to enhance his/her development
- Pupil-centred and pupil-directed
- Goal is to enable learners to further their own learning

### *Assessment of Learning (A.o.L.)*

- Involves assessing a pupil's learning at the end of a given instructional period
- Teacher-led
- Goal is to establish levels of attainment

## Assessment Techniques

The Looking at Our School Document 2022 should be referred to in order for teachers to identify the Domains and Statements of Practise.

The assessment techniques used in our school include:

- Teacher observation (focused, continuous, informed and structured)
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Self-Assessment e.g. 2 stars and a wish
- Discussion/conferencing
- Concept Mapping
- Checklists/rating scales
- Time-sampling recording
- Portfolios/projects
- Standardised Testing
- Diagnostic Testing

## Informal Assessment

**A range of informal evidence is kept, in the form of:**

- Initial information gathered from the enrolment form.
- Teacher observation based on checklists, profiles.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests.
- Class test results for example spellings, tables etc.
- Variety of word recognition tests (particular to junior classes)
- End of each instructional term Maths and English assessments at all levels.
- Children's copies – class and homework samples, portfolios and projects.
- The school plans for each curricular area address the issue of assessment.

Records of these teacher–designed tests are kept by the individual teachers in the assessment folder. Teachers may communicate the results of informal assessment with parents.

Error analysis is an important part of our assessment programme. This means ascertaining from the child what the process of his/her thinking is e.g. where did you get that answer from? How did you get that answer?

At the end of each school year, the class teacher forwards the assessment folder to the pupil’s class teacher for the following year.

### **Standardised tests**

The school administers Micra-T Literacy Test and the Sigma-T Maths Tests. All classes from First Class up will be tested towards the end of the last term, generally in May.

- The Deputy Principal is responsible for purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing materials.
- Class teachers administer the standardised tests. The SET teacher follows up on children absent on day of testing having been informed by class teachers. Parents will be informed on when the testing will take place in order to minimise absences.
- Pupils who are being tested, other than at the class level, are tested separately in the SEN room.
- Various results are recorded – raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN, Reading age. This method is used in all classes from first to sixth. The whole-class record is printed for each class level, by the class teacher, and filed in the office. Each class teacher records the results on the child’s Pupil Profile Record sheet.
- Class teachers and the SET teacher are involved in analysis of results. Test results are discussed and shared with the Principal and SET teacher subsequently during a staff meeting at the end of the school year.
- Class teachers undertake analysis at class level and use the results to plan the next stage in each child’s learning and to monitor progress. Test results help to inform planning in the school. They may indicate areas of the curriculum needing further development.
- In the case of all pupils from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class, inclusive, results of the standardised tests are communicated to parents in the end-of-year reports. The STEN score is the format chosen by St Joseph’s N.S. (it is compulsory for the results for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> to be communicated to parents and to the DES).

- Parents are provided with an explanatory letter when results are notified to them and are given an opportunity to discuss results with teachers if they so wish.
  - **In the case of Sigma T tests:** the percentage correct by each child in the following skills is recorded (i) understanding concepts and facts (ii) performing computations and procedures (iii) solving word problems.
  - The percentage recorded by each child in each of the five strands is recorded.
  - A class average for both of the above is also recorded.
  - The percentile attained by each child is tracked from one year to the next.
  - The school has used the PDST Three Year English and Mathematics Aggregate STEN Results Recording Tool in order to assist with the schools Literacy and Numeracy Improvement Plans.
- Students may be excluded from standardised testing if, in the view of the school principal, they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the tests or, in the case of migrant students, where the level of English required in the test would make attempting the test impossible.

### Screening

The following are used to screen:

- In Junior Infants pupils are screened using class teacher and SET teacher observation and any available assessment reports provided by outside agencies.
- Children in Senior Infants are screened half way through the second term using the MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test) assessment.
- NEPS checklists.
- NEPS ‘My Thoughts About School’ assessment.
- Gross and fine motor checklists.
- Phonics checklists.
- Other assessment/ screening tools used may include:
  - Teacher Observation
  - Teacher designed tasks and tests
  - Portfolios
  - Project work
  - Class/homework copies
  - Standardised tests
  - Diagnostic tests
  - Discrepancies between Micra T and Sigma T

### Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic testing is carried out when deemed necessary. Such tests will be administered by the SEN teacher, following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. A consent form will be issued to parents before administering the Diagnostic tests, informing them of what tests will be administered and when they

will take place. Tests results are analysed to inform future teaching and learning. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by Circular 13/17 and the Guidelines for Primary Schools – Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, where a staged approach is used by the individual class teacher before recourse to diagnostic testing/psychological assessment. Parents will be provided with the test results and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed.

The diagnostic tests used in the school include

- NFER Nelson
- Quest Reading Diagnostic Test
- Quest Number Diagnostic Test
- M.A.L.T.
- NEALE

The results of diagnostic assessments are recorded in the Individual Educational Plan for each pupil who is on School Support Plus. It will also include:

- Previous test results
- Relevant information from class teachers, parents and other professionals
- Identification of the pupil's particular needs, strengths and areas of concern.
- The learning targets to be achieved by the child.

### **Procedures for Further Assessment**

After diagnostic assessment and a complete instructional term of SEN teaching, each child's Support Plan/ IEP will be reviewed. If there are serious concerns expressed by the parents, support teacher and class teacher, further assessment options will be explored.

### **Psychological Assessment**

A psychological assessment may be considered (on the advice of the NEPS psychologist/ arising from concerns outlined by school staff) in order to provide us with:

- Additional information about a child's difficulties
- Advice about teaching strategies and resources
- Assistance in applying for other support e.g. Special Needs Assistants/ Assistive Technology

A Psychological Assessment may be recommended where:

- The results of diagnostic testing carried out by the SET warrant further assessment and a Special Education Need, learning disability or specific learning difficulty is suspected.
- Having initiated a School Support Plan with a pupil, little progress is taking place.
- There appears to be a marked discrepancy between perceived ability and performance.
- There are several emotional and/or behavioural concerns.
- When a child is preparing to transition to Secondary School.

### **Provision of Psychological Assessment**

- Psychological Assessments may be conducted via the school or privately.
- The school is assigned a school psychologist through NEPS scheme.
- The number of educational assessments is at the discretion of NEPS.
- Priority is given to younger children with Special Education Conditions and/or serious Learning Difficulties and children in 6<sup>th</sup> class who may be leaving the school with undiagnosed Learning Disabilities
- Parents may choose to arrange an assessment privately through a private Educational Assessment.

### **Procedure for Psychological Assessment**

- Class Teacher, in consultation with the Special Education Teacher, recommends an Assessment to the Principal.
- The Principal/SET contacts the NEPS Psychologist and makes a request for involvement. The psychologist then issues a 'Request for Involvement' form to the school.
- The Class Teacher and SET complete the form, in consultation with the parents.
- The Principal forwards the form to the NEPS Psychologist.
- The NEPS Psychologist will meet with staff and/or parents, before observing the pupil and carrying out the assessment, when appropriate. A report is issued to the school following the visit(s).
- The Psychologist will follow-up on the report with the parents and school staff.
- The results of assessments will guide the drafting of a Support Plan for the pupil if appropriate. It determines the level of intervention by the SET.

### **Recording & Storing the Results of Assessment**

- The class teacher records assessment results, based on standardised tests. Copies of class records are sent to office for filing in pupil individual folders. A copy is also kept by the class teacher and SET teacher, to inform teaching and learning. The results are also entered into the class teachers Pupil Profile folders.

- Each teacher completes the Pupil Personal Profile as and when required. This is kept in the teacher's class assessment folder and passed on at the end of the school.
- SET test results are kept on file.
- Psychological tests/reports and tests/reports administered by outside professionals/agencies will be kept in the child's folder in the filing cabinet in the principal's office. The SET teacher will also have a copy of these tests and reports.
- Parents are informed of results of formal testing at parent-teacher meetings or by arranged meeting if considered necessary.
- End of year reports record the STEN score achieved in both the Micra T and the Sigma T (using the NCCA approved standard report template) and are forwarded to the parents in June, allowing sufficient time to allow parents a reasonable opportunity to seek meetings with the principal and/or teacher to discuss the written report if necessary. The school will provide parents with copies of the NCCA explanatory leaflets when issuing written reports to parents.
- Meetings involving class teachers, parents, SET are organised when deemed necessary as a result of screening procedures.
- Each teacher will have an Assessment folder, which is passed on to the pupils next class teacher.
- Completed Micra T and Sigma T books are filed in the office in the pupil files.

### **Access to Assessment Results**

As per the school's Data Protection Policy, the following will have access where relevant and appropriate to children's records;

- Parents/guardians – see Appendix 1 from CPMSA outlining details of access
- Past pupils over 18
- Health Service Executive
- Designated school personnel
- Department of Education & Skills
- First and second-level schools (where relevant).

A parental authorisation form must be completed by parents in the event of data being transferred to / obtained from outside agencies such as health professionals etc. Outside agencies requesting access to records must do so in writing giving seven days notice. Parents/Guardians can make such a request either by phone, email or in writing. The right to erasure or rectification is available to change any mistakes or inaccuracies by proper authorisation through the same procedures.

A standardised school report form (NCCA Template) is used which is issued to parents at the end of each school year. A copy of a pupil's end of year report is forwarded on to the school to which he/she is transferring, upon written confirmation that the child has been enrolled in that school. Similarly, the principal writes to the school from which a child has transferred from, confirming that child's enrolment in St. Joseph's National



School, requesting that child's end of year report and any other information which may be relevant.

### **Success Criteria**

This policy is considered successful if:

- Selection, support, re-assessment and evaluation of children needing learning support or resource runs 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 through passing on of pupil profile folders and meetings between past and current teachers of individual classes.
- Class teachers monitor progress, provide motivation for the children and inform their planning.
- The school will use the standardised test results in reading and mathematics and other assessment information to inform the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

***Class Teacher:*** Responsible for the administration, correction and recording of tests as outlined for classes. Class teachers are responsible for passing a copy of the results to the Principal and Special Education Teachers. Scores on Standardised Tests will be analysed and discussed on a whole school basis.

***Special Education Teachers:*** Responsible for the administration, correction and recording of Diagnostic tests and the dissemination of the test results to the class teachers, parents and principal.

***Principal:*** Overall responsibility.

### **Translating Policy into Action**

In translating our policy into effective action we need to be in agreement on how we give feedback to pupils and parents/guardians.

***Effective feedback to pupils:***

This needs to be managed

- In the context of an ongoing dialogue between pupil and teacher in a positive teaching environment
- In sensitive language appropriate to the pupil
- In a way that allows comments on strengths and weaknesses to be sensitive and to motivate improved performances

***Effective reporting to parents/guardians:***

This needs to

- Provide clear communication about the achievement and effort of pupils. This needs to comply with the school's mission statement.
- Principal and teachers are required to report on children's progress twice during the school year- this takes the format of a parent teacher meeting in November and written report at the end of the school year.
- Parents and teachers may need to meet at other times during the school year to discuss a child's progress.
- Provide consistency across classes in order to give parents/guardians confidence that they have an objective picture of how their child is performing.
- Be in concise, appropriate language.
- Provide in Individual Pupil Learning Profiles, a diagnosis of pupil's strengths and weaknesses and clear strategies for improvement.
- End of year reports (using the NCCA approved standard report template) will be forwarded to the parents, allowing sufficient time to allow parents a reasonable opportunity to seek meetings with the principal and/or teacher to discuss the written report if necessary.

<b>Monitoring and Review</b>
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This policy has been in force since February 2012. This current version was reviewed and ratified by the Board on Management on 05/12/2022.

This policy will be due for review in three years, that is, during the school year 25/26. It may be revisited sooner if the need arises.

Signed:  
David Leahy,  
Chairperson BOM

## Appendix 1

### Assessment Tools (this list is not exhaustive)

- Examples of Assessment of Pupils are stored by the Teacher in an Assessment Folder

### **English and Mathematics**

#### **Junior Infants**

Word Checklists

English Reader Checklists

Sounds Checklists

Oral Language Checklist/ observation notes

Handwriting checklist

Maths Checklists

Teacher designed tests and tasks

Teacher designed checklists

Two stars and a wish/ thumbs up, thumbs down/ traffic lights

Teacher observation

Pupil Self Assessment

Pupils' ability to cope with success/failure

Level of participation

Portfolio of children's written work/ letter formation/informal writing and drawings

End of term Maths & English Assessment

Concept Mapping

#### **Senior Infants**

Word Checklists

English Reader Checklists

Sounds Checklists

Oral Language Checklist/ observation notes

Handwriting checklist

Teacher designed checklists

Two stars and a wish/ thumbs up, thumbs down/ traffic lights

Maths Checklists

Sentence Dictation

Teacher designed tests and tasks

Teacher observation

Pupil Self Assessment

Middle Infant Screening Test

Pupil Self Assessment

Pupils' ability to cope with success/failure

Concept Mapping

Level of participation

Portfolio of children's written work

End of term Maths & English Assessment

#### **First Class**

Teacher designed tests and tasks

Teacher designed checklists  
KWL  
Concept Mapping  
End of term Maths & English Assessment  
L.S.C.W.C spelling practice  
Teacher observation  
Pupil Self Assessment  
Sigma-T  
Micra -T  
Oral Assessment:  
    Mental Maths  
    Recalling Stories  
    Memory Games (Listening+Responding)  
    Sequencing Stories (Gaeilge and English)  
Weekly Testing:  
    Dictation  
    Spelling Test  
    Tables and Mental Maths  
Checklists: Word Checklists  
    Oral Language Checklist/ observation notes  
    Handwriting checklist  
    Maths Checklists  
    Written conventions checklists  
    Comprehension strategies checklists  
    Sounds Checklists  
Teacher Designed Tasks:  
    Paired Tasks  
    Group Tasks  
    Individual Tasks  
    Whole Class tasks  
Pupils' ability to cope with success/failure  
Level of participation  
Portfolio of children's written work

## **Second Class**

Teacher designed tests and tasks  
L.S.C.W.C spelling practice  
Writing Conference Record Sheet  
Teacher observation  
Teacher designed checklists  
Concept Mapping  
KWL  
Pupil Self Assessment  
Maths and English Questionnaires for the children  
Sigma-T  
Micra -T  
Oral Assessment:  
    Mental Maths  
    Recalling Stories  
    Memory Games (Listening+Responding)

### Sequencing Stories (Gaeilge and English)

#### Weekly Testing:

- Dictation
- Spelling Test
- Tables and Mental Maths

#### Checklists:

- Oral Language Checklist/ observation notes
- Handwriting checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Checklist
- Reading checklists/ observation notes
- Written Conventions checklist
- Maths Checklists

#### Teacher Designed Tasks:

- Paired Tasks
- Group Tasks
- Individual Tasks
- Whole Class tasks

Pupils' ability to cope with success/failure

Level of participation

Portfolio of children's written work

End of term Maths & English Assessment

Pupil responses to oral questioning

Pupil written answers

### **Third Class**

Teacher designed tests and tasks

L.S.C.W.C spelling practice

Teacher observation

Teacher designed checklists

K.W.L.

Concept Mapping

Pupil Self Assessment

Maths and English Pupil Questionnaires

Sigma-T

Micra -T

Oral Assessment:

- Mental Maths
- Recalling Stories
- Memory Games (Listening+Responding)
- Sequencing Stories (Gaeilge and English)

#### Weekly Testing:

- Dictation
- Spelling Test
- Tables and Mental Maths

#### Checklists:

- Oral Language Checklist/observation notes
- Handwriting checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Checklist/ observation notes
- Written conventions checklist/ observation notes

Reading checklists/ observation notes  
Maths Checklists  
Teacher Designed Tasks:  
Paired Tasks  
Group Tasks  
Individual Tasks  
Whole Class tasks  
Pupils' ability to cope with success/failure  
Writing Conference Record Sheet  
Level of participation  
End of term Maths & English Assessment  
Portfolio of children's written work

#### **Fourth Class**

Teacher designed tests and tasks  
K.W.L.  
Concept Mapping  
English and Maths Pupil Questionnaire  
L.S.C.W.C spelling practice  
Teacher designed checklists  
Teacher observation  
Writing Conference Record Sheet  
Pupil Self Assessment  
Sigma-T  
Micra -T  
Oral Assessment:  
Mental Maths  
Recalling Stories  
Memory Games (Listening+Responding)  
Sequencing Stories (Gaeilge and English)  
Weekly Testing:  
Dictation  
Spelling Test  
Tables and Mental Maths  
Checklists:  
Oral Language Checklist/ observation notes  
Handwriting checklist  
Comprehension strategies checklist  
Conventions of print checklist  
Reading checklist/ observation notes  
Maths Checklists  
Teacher Designed Tasks:  
Paired Tasks  
Group Tasks  
Individual Tasks

### Whole Class tasks

Pupils' ability to cope with success/failure  
Level of participation  
End of term Maths & English Assessment  
Portfolio of children's written work  
English and Maths Pupil Questionnaires

### **Fifth Class**

Teacher designed tests and tasks  
L.S.C.W.C spelling practice  
Teacher observation  
Teacher designed checklists  
K.W.L.  
Concept Mapping  
Writing Conference Record Sheet  
Pupil Self Assessment  
Sigma-T  
Micra -T  
Oral Assessment:  
    Mental Maths  
    Recalling Stories  
    Memory Games (Listening+Responding)  
    Sequencing Stories (Gaeilge and English)

#### Weekly Testing:

    Dictation  
    Spelling Test  
    Tables and Mental Maths

#### Checklists:

    Oral Language Checklist/ observation notes  
    Reading checklist/ observation notes  
    Conventions of Print Checklist  
    Comprehension Strategies Checklists  
    Handwriting checklist  
    Maths Checklists

#### Teacher Designed Tasks:

    Paired Tasks  
    Group Tasks  
    Individual Tasks  
    Whole Class tasks

Pupils' ability to cope with success/failure  
Level of participation  
End of term Maths & English Assessment  
Portfolio of children's written work  
English and Maths Pupil Questionnaires

### **Sixth Class**

English: Teacher designed tests and tasks  
L.S.C.W.C spelling practice  
Teacher observation  
K.W.L.  
Concept Mapping  
English and Maths Pupil Questionnaire  
Pupil Self Assessment  
Sigma-T  
Micra -T  
Oral Assessment:  
    Mental Maths  
    Recalling Stories  
    Memory Games (Listening+Responding)  
    Sequencing Stories (Gaeilge and English)  
Weekly Testing:  
    Dictation  
    Spelling Test  
    Tables and Mental Maths  
Checklists:  
    Oral Language Checklist/ observations  
    Reading Checklist/ observations  
    Writing conventions checklist  
    Comprehension Strategies Checklist  
    Handwriting checklist  
    Maths Checklist  
Teacher Designed Tasks:  
    Paired Tasks  
    Group Tasks  
    Individual Tasks  
    Whole Class tasks  
Pupils' ability to cope with success/failure  
Level of participation  
End of term Maths & English Assessment  
Portfolio of children's written work  
Writing Conference Record Sheet

**Gaeilge:**

Leibhéal agus luas-dirbhreathnú an mhúinteora ar na bpáistí  
Rochtain agus freagairt-tascanna agus trialacha deartha  
Litriú-Ceartlitriú gach coicís/ seachtain  
Gramméir  
Scrúdú Gaeilge tar éis tearmaí  
Bailiúcháin d'obair agus de thionscadail an pháiste  
Self Assessment

**S.E.S.E**

Self assessment



Concept mapping  
KWL  
Teacher Designed Checklists  
Sequencing  
Storytelling  
Portfolio  
Questioning  
Observation notes  
Teacher designed tasks +tests  
Projects  
Staged assessments  
Checklist

### Arts

Observation  
Profiles  
Teacher designed tasks  
Questioning  
Projects  
Checklist

- On the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 each teacher was handed an Assessment folder containing:
  - A copy of the NCCA Report Template approved by staff.
  - Information on the Report Card Template
  - Copy of letter to parents on the school report.
  - Copy of letter to parents informing them on understanding the STEN Score (reporting method approved by staff).
  - PPDS Assessment Booklet- detailing effective assessment of/ for learning and pupil self assessment.
  - Information on Aistear Assessment in the Junior Room.
  - Handout from Action on AFL techniques.
  - NCCA information on recording children's programme in Irish.
  - AFL checklist and Teacher Reflection sheet- to assist teachers in planning their assessment.
  - Examples of assessment from the Drumcondra English Profile- checklists and indicators for Oral Language, Reading and Writing.
  - Copy of Section2 Assessment from 'Assessment in the Primary School Classroom.
  - Examples of English and Maths Pupil Questionnaires.